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THE YEAR.

Behold! a bride, profusely dressed,
Gems on her bosom, in her hair,
Her form by wreathing flowers caressed.
Her brow unmarked by thought or care.
Bewildering mask, gifts untold,
Answering the consummated vow—
Ah! be it again, or young or old,
Will she be beautiful as now.

A happy wife with glowing eyes,
And ripen tint on lip and cheek,
Deep in the sweetest mysteries
That life may hold and love bespeak,
Her growing children 'round her close,
Content supreme reigns on her brow,
Her minstrels touch the olden string—
She ne'er was beautiful as now.

A widow, with prone, empty hands,
Shorn of her wealth and treasures all,
With lifted eyes she calmly stands
Beside the silver-fringed pall.
That holds her dear and early dead.
Unbidden'ed sunbeams cross the veil,
Prophetic radiance crowns her head,
With praying lips and patient brow
The waiting earth draws nearer God;
She ne'er was beautiful as now.

MIRIAM FARE.

A WOMAN'S VOW.

BY MARY E. WOODSON.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BEATING THE GALLOWS.

The hours of the morning wore on, and a grand concourse of people came thronging by every highway and rail to the vicinity of the jail at W——.

Men and women who had not quitted their homes for years were there, from the early dawn, expectant, eager to catch but one glimpse of the murderer.

Psychologists, artists and newspaper reporters were occupying prominent places, ready to make traffic out of the cut of the head, the features and the lightest word of the victim to the law. Denser and denser until an undulating sea of human forms swelled the avenues leading to the place of execution.

The officials came and went with an ominous silence, and at eleven o'clock the prisoner was reported to be alone with a priest.

"He is taking care of his own soul. Let him remember that of his victim," they cried out. "May God's mercy be far from him! Carroll Tressylian was the people's benefactor, and may vengeance come upon his murderer, body and soul."

At length the Rev. George Withers came out, with the mist of tears still upon his eyes, and reported that the prisoner begged he might be left alone until the final hour of execution.

"What time did he give his victim for prayer? Bring him out! Bring him out!" they cried. But the sheriff, with the keys, was nowhere to be seen, and the surging tide swelled with increasing tumult.

The minutes wore away slowly enough to those without, and the bell in the court-house steeple struck twelve. Mobs at all times are dangerous. The excitement prevailing in this one was intense, and the half-smothered fires seemed threatening to break into a general conflagration.

"Bring him out! bring him out!"

Who was it standing upon the steps that led to the jail-yard gate?

It was Earle Templeton, the man who had sworn to see his dead friend avenged, and he now waved his hand in token that he wished to be heard.

More powerful than the Danish king of old, the sea before him was stilled, and the clarion-like notes of his voice rang out with perfect distinctness.

He demanded of them the meaning of the tumult he witnessed. They were there with him to see the execution of justice. Let them show themselves men—enlightened, intelligent men—come to the performance of a stern duty; not savages in the pursuit of vengeance, however just might be the motive that inspired it. The outcries of a mob are a relic of barbarism. Were the murderer in their midst, they should not lay their hands upon him save to lead him to the foot of the gallows. The statutes of their country had decreed. They had no right to lift their voices. In half an hour the sheriff would bring out the murderer to his doom: nor would he be persuaded or intimidated until every moment of the time had passed.

This man's peculiar influence was felt even here. The rage of the multitude subsided as he spoke, and for the remaining time no outcries were heard.

And now the sheriff mounted the steps, and opened the doors of the jail, his chosen deputies following at his heels. As by one simultaneous impulse the crowd swayed for a moment, and was still.

In the profound silence the moments seemed lengthening into hours, and then the officials came out again alone—

"Where is the murderer? We will have him," was the cry once more.

The Rev. Mr. Withers had again gone in with the sheriffs, and now stepped in advance of them.

"The murderer has already gone to his earthly doom," he called out, solemnly. "He has added the last unpardonable sin of suicide to his unconfessed murder, and is dead."

A wild, baffled cry arose from without.

"Dead!"

They could scarcely credit their senses.

"Dead!"

"Aye, dead!" repeated the vicar, slowly. "By some unknown means he had secured a fatal poison, and his soul is in the hands of his God. His mortal remains will be brought out and given in charge to his friends as soon as assurance can be felt that this last request of a broken-hearted mother and dying wife will be respected."

At first there seemed an inclination on the part of the people to rush violently into the jail, seize on the body, and lifeless though they should find it, to tear it limb from limb, but the sheriff had glided back and barred the doors behind him.

"Bring him out. It is some trick. Let us see that he is dead."

"Only when quiet is restored. Then you can see for yourselves, and depart without a doubt. Who here do you think would have defrauded the ends of justice? You are men with human hearts in your breasts. Think, if you can, of the mother, wife and sister of this wretched criminal waiting at home for their dead, and let him, in God's name be taken to them."

A suppressed hum passed up from the crowd; it was difficult to tell whether of assent or dissent, and then followed a few moments of silence.

Of all the men here assembled, there were two whose faces were moved to a far greater extent than the rest. These two men were Earle Templeton and George Chester; and each of them was swayed by diametrically opposite influences. Earle Templeton seemed, for the moment, stunned by a blow from the hand of Destiny that had outwitted him; Dr. Chester, with visibly heaving bosom, was eagerly watching the crowd about him.

"Let us see the fellow who has cheated us to the last, and we will disperse."

Lower and lower ebbed the tide. Public indignation was appeased. Curiosity alone seemed dominant now.

And now the doors of his earthly prison were opened, and Ralph Thornton's inanimate body was brought forth, but his unfettered spirit was beyond their reach. He had been placed in the rough, public coffin, and the bearers were forced to set down their load at the foot of the steps. Strangers, who had never looked upon him in life, came eagerly now to touch his brow or lift one of his pulseless hands, that they might make sure that it was the King of Terrors, indeed, who had cheated them of their show. And at last they seemed convinced, and fell away.

"Now," cried George Chester, after a fellow physician had held the hand of the suicide for a moment, and then released it with a satisfied shake of the head, "now for my duty." He motioned to some attendants in his employ, and they advanced quickly and bore away their burden, as if still afraid of being punished for any show of courtesy to the dishonored remains.

Back, at last, to Coldham, whither the tidings had sped before them, but no one had taken the intelligence to his former home. The mother and sister, from an inner room, heard the tramp of feet without, and with a shudder knew what it meant.

"It is over! oh, God be praised, it is over!"

Dr. Chester opened the door and came in. He did not seek to administer comfort; he knew that would be in vain. In the room beyond lay the terrible proof of all their woes.

"Tell me, at least tell me, there was no violent struggle—that the death agony came quickly," cried the mother.

"Peacefully, as in sleep," answered George Chester. "Believe me, there was not a moment's pain to him."

It was hard to stand by and see this wretched woman beat herself and tear her gray hair in the wildness of her grief, but the more violent the storm, he thought, the quicker it must abate. Lilian came up to him with the same hard, outward calm of manner.

"You helped him, George?" she whispered. "You did not let him become a spectacle for all that gaping crowd. He did not die on the scaffold?"

The simple disgrace seemed to weigh upon her. Had she no thought, he wondered, for the hereafter of a soul that voluntarily frees itself from its earthly shackles?

"No," he whispered; "that, at least, has been shunned. And now, as you have loved your brother, look to your mother. Compose her quickly, or she will lose her reason. I will go in to Mary, and then you must prepare yourselves to see him for the last time.

He found the young wife sleeping still. "She had been awake but for a few moments," the attendant declared, "and had fallen off again into a slumber that seemed like death." He felt her pulse, but did not manifest any uneasiness. After a few seconds at her side, he went again into the next room, where the coffin had been deposited, and after a careful arrangement of the body, sat down awhile among the men.

"Where was it to be buried?"

The grave had been dug in a corner of the garden, by that of his father, whose remains had been interred three years before, with the profoundest sympathy of every citizen of the place, Mr. Tressylian included.

There were those who would have objected if they could. A murderer had no right to be honorably buried by the grave of decent folk in their midst. Would his manes ever be laid? Would not his troubled spirit rather be ever wandering in their midst, and furnish rich material for wild ghost stories to their children's children? But the widow's cottage was her own, and no one could deny her the right.

Night had come on, and the attendants were thinned out. Lewis Hartman was among the few left. Dr. Chester had been again with the family, and now returned.

"Hartman," he said, with something like a choking in his throat, "it was his wish that I should watch here alone to-night, and however painful it may be, it must be done. You can return before nine in the morning, when the burial will take place."

"But," replied Hartman, rather haughtily, "perhaps I may be of service to the family. I do not envy you your duty here, but Mrs. Thornton—Lilian, perhaps I may serve them."

George Chester swung around as though he had received a blow. He was indignant that this man had dared use her name thus freely, and might have spoken words he would have regretted had not another voice interrupted him.

"No, Mr. Hartman, we prefer to remain alone, with the exception of Dr. Chester, who must stay on my sister's account. If you will, you can return to-morrow." It was Lilian who had entered, and now stood looking at the door as though waiting for him to pass out. There was no alternative but to obey.

"I would shed my heart's blood to serve you," he murmured, as he bowed and withdrew, but she had not heard him.

"You too," she said to Dr. Chester, when they were alone with the coffin, at which she had not yet looked. "I would be left with no one but him."

Oh, how his heart yearned toward her! but he saw that he too must obey. Only when he went out he raised Mrs. Thornton from the floor, and spoke to her quickly.

"Go to your daughter, madam. Be as composed as you can, and look at poor Ralph for the last time. We must give her all of our attention or she will lose her mind. She has not performed one natural act—has not uttered one womanly thought for a number of days that it makes me shudder to think of. If you could make her breathe one prayer at his side. Go, and when you bring her out in half an hour, do it with a promise from her that she will not return again at all."

The poor mother seemed to arouse herself for fresh burdens that she must bear. Like David when told that the child of Bathsheba was dead, she rose up and girded herself with new strength. A few moments since, and the dead had engrossed every feeling; now that the living required her attention, she dared not longer mourn.

She opened the door of the room that contained her son's body, and walked resolutely in.

Lilian stood before the couch upon which he had been laid, looking, with unmoistened eyes, down at the pale face, that had been wont to change its expression with almost every breath.

"Oh! my Lilian, my daughter! It is hard, but we must submit, our darling is now a blessed martyr in the sight of God. We must prepare to go to Him, since He cannot come to us. Let us pray here."

She had passed her arm about the girl's slender waist, and gently strove to bring her upon her knees beside the inanimate object of their love; but Lilian resisted the effort.

"No, mother," she said, half angrily. "My whole soul rebels at this cruel blow. There is no justice—no mercy anywhere. To whom then can I pray?"

"Oh, my daughter!" cried Mrs. Thornton, falling in a passion of tears upon the girl's breast. "This is the worst blow of all to me. A godless woman is a fearful thing. He died in the triumph of faith. 'Tell them,' was his last message, 'that though my innocent life is required by the law, and we may meet again only in another world, I dare not question the wisdom or the mercy of God.' Think, Lilian, think how you would pain him if he could see you as you are!"

"He knew how I loved him," she answered, in the same hollow, tearless voice, "and he would expect me to grieve for him. Oh, I am all in the dark!"

"Let us pray, and the light will come," whispered her mother, imploringly.

"Yes. Let us kneel. I can pray now," answered Lilian, and sinking down at her mother's side, she passed one arm across her brother's breast and lay motionless after that, with her cheek pressed to his. Mrs. Thornton's face was buried in the pillow, and her whole frame shook with emotion.

Dr. Chester had again slipped noiselessly into the room; and after a little he gently raised the mother first, and then Lilian. The girl looked up at him eagerly.

"Oh, George! he is not cold, and I am sure I felt a faint quiver in the muscles of his face. Suppose he should not be dead!"

"Hush! for God's sake, hush!" cried George Chester, with unnatural alarm. "See how you pain your mother! No! he is not cold yet, I did not expect it. But you must retire now, and you must promise me too that you will not cross this threshold again."

"Why may I not keep vigil here for the last night?" she said. "Mary will need you. Let me remain."

"Oh! Lilian, Lilian!" he exclaimed, seizing her hand and half crushing it against his breast—"do you think that in all this, I who loved him as a brother, have not suffered too? If I have not staggered with my cross it was because of my greater strength; not that the burden was lighter to bear. It can only heighten the horror that is on you, and believe me I have weighty reasons for asking that you look at him for the last time now. I have tried to serve you, Lilian, and though it is not the part of disinterestedness to claim a reward, I yet ask you to do this for my sake."

"Yes, George, I do owe you a return," she said, "and in this, believe me, I make it. The thought had come to me that we might do something for him. I was mad to imagine it, I dare say, but though even I must confess the impotency of human assistance to avail him, the bare thought of laying him in his grave, even now, without it, makes my blood run cold. Promise me then that he shall not be buried until this unnatural warmth has given place to the ice of death."

"I swear to you that he shall not. Now, Lilian, go. Madam, for the love of God, take her away!"

"Oh! my child! let us go away from him forever," said the mother, "but do not go with that set, stony face, for it makes me fear that your heart is still harder. Remember we have prayed beside him."

"Yes, I prayed," she said, "but there was no mercy in my petition, I asked only for vengeance on those who helped to bring him to this."

"Lily, Lily, you must ask help of God to-night, or you are lost," sobbed the poor mother. "Doctor, bring her away and tell her that she is breaking my heart."

Dr. Chester took her resolutely by the hand and led her out across the hall and into a remote chamber. "Lilian," he said, "this is your mother beside you. She should be dearer than brother or sister. Look at her, and see how you are paining her."

She raised her full eyes to her mother's face for some moments with the same cold, steel-like glitter; but as she noted its pallid hue, and the deep furrows of care that had not been there in their happier days, they were suffused with tears, and stretching out her arms, she fell sobbing upon her mother's breast.

"Thank God!" murmured the physician, fervently, as he stepped back and closed the door. "She may stand it now until—until the worst is over. Was ever man in such a strait as I am for to-night? But first, I must look to the wife."

Mary had been awake a few hours before, and again talking in the wildness of delirium; but once more the nurse reported her in a sound sleep.

"Again, thank God!" he thought, as he crossed to the room where his lonely vigil was to be kept. "Heaven grant that I may not be disturbed for the few hours that are left. And now for the most painful trial of my whole life."

So saying, he stepped lightly across the threshold, looked anxiously around, placed the key on the inside of the door, which he closed softly, and then locked and bolted it behind him.

IN THE PRESENCE OF THE DEAD.

"LILIAN STOOD LOOKING WITH UNMOISTENED EYES DOWN AT THE PALE FACE, THAT HAD BEEN WONT TO CHANGE ITS EXPRESSION WITH ALMOST EVERY BREATH."

CHAPTER XIX.

There were but few attendants, as may be imagined, at the burial the next morning. Lewis Hartman came in some time before the appointed hour, but he found the workmen had already screwed down the coffin and were ready for its interment. He bowed formally to Dr. Chester, and followed the little procession out. He expressed no desire to look again on the man whom he had not professed to care a great deal about when living, and the coffin was quickly lowered to its last resting-place. Strong hands shoveled in the earth, the work of a few brief moments with them, and the last duty was paid. While there, as the good people who passed that way were wont to whisper for many a year to come, lay the body of as foul a murderer as ever suffered for crime.

Persons passing this street got as far to the opposite side as possible, and looked furtively at the house. A profound quiet was seen, however, to reign there. Dr. Chester passed in and out frequently. Mary Thornton might be dead for all that was known to the contrary. The truth was, however, that she was a great deal better. She had been propped up on pillows during the day, and what she said was quite rational.

Lilian had slept several hours the night previous, and seemed rather more like her natural self; but for that and one or two succeeding days, one would have thought that she made a point of avoiding an especial interview with George Chester. Once or twice he had endeavored to draw her out to the door, but had failed of success. On the third evening he saw her standing near the steps of the portico, looking mournfully up toward Carroll Tressylian's house, but before he could reach her side, she had hurried in.

He had been alone for a while with his patient, when mother and daughter came in.

"I have made arrangements to take Mary to N—— to-morrow," he said. "The downward trip can be made without danger, since this change in the weather, and I need advice about her. Dr. Thorpe must be consulted. And besides, you two are not able to nurse her any longer."

"But we are to accompany her. She cannot go alone," said Mrs. Thornton.

Dr. Chester colored painfully.

"I—I had not seen the necessity. I had expected to hire nurses for her; you two are exhausted."

"What! mother and sister remain at home, while you are left with the sole charge of her?" said Mrs. Thornton, resolutely. "Doctor, you must be dreaming."

By no means dreaming" one were to judge from the expression of his face. Yet he seemed most of all annoyed that he could advance no reasonable excuse for persisting in going alone with his charge. He broke quite down in the first effort, and confessing that "he had not thought of it," was forced, as if to make amends, to embrace them the next moment in his plans for departure. The arrangements were soon completed, and on the following day the cottage was indeed closed.

Dr. Chester had already been to N——, and secured a small ready-furnished house in the suburbs. Thither the three women were conducted and at once domesticated.

Dr. Thorpe was called in on the evening of their arrival, and declared Mary in no immediate danger. From this time her improvement was almost hourly perceptible.

There were some peculiarities now observable in George Chester's manner. There was a room in this house which he had kept carefully locked from the day of their arrival. "It contained his drugs," he said, "and he feared to leave them exposed." This might not be unnatural; but when Mrs. Thornton one day proposed to take the key herself and have the room dusted and arranged for him, he grew painfully nervous, and declared that he could not bear the idea of any uninformed person, and especially a woman, crossing the threshold. After this, she of course said nothing further on the subject. But when Mary had been moving about the house for a few days, the mother's astonishment may be better imagined than expressed, when chancing one night to cross the hall without a light, she plainly saw her son's widow glide out from the forbidden door, while it was hastily closed, as she could see, by a man's hand, and locked behind her.

"Mary, my child," she exclaimed, "what on earth were you doing in that room. You know Dr. Chester's objection to our going there."

"George is in there himself, mother, and he called me," she said, falteringly. "There was no earthly danger."

"But this time of night, Mary—and alone! What could he want with you? Surely your room would have been the more seemly place, if the conference was one to which neither I nor my daughter must be admitted."

"Mother!" exclaimed Mary, drawing herself up proudly, though it was quite perceptible that her bosom was still heaving with ill-suppressed emotion; "you must give me credit for being in my right mind now; and believe me also that I should not have been there if it had not been in every way proper for me to go." And only stopping long enough to kiss the old lady, quite composedly, she passed on to her own room, and closed the door behind her.

Mrs. Thornton went back into her daughter's apartment, like one dazed by the light. She fell asleep with a vague impression of something that she could not understand, perplexing her to an unusual extent. And fell to dreaming of their old home at Coldham.

Ah, thank Heaven for sleep and dreams! Our dead—and worse still, our estranged may come back to us then, clad in the warm vestments of life and love! The eye that could thrill us with its tender glance, again quickens our pulse. The lips speak to us in the never-to-be-forgotten, caressing tones, their breath commingles with our own, they touch ours with a kiss that launches us out into an ocean of divine ecstasy, until we take with us into the sorrows of the day, hushed and holy memories that will lead us to sigh for a higher, more perfect life than this fleeting existence of ours, that is in itself but a dream at last!

As she lay thus awake, as she firmly be-

lieved, the door opened, and a shadowy form advanced toward her. As it neared her she would have cried out, but her tongue seemed to cleave to the roof of her mouth. The figure came up close to the bed-side, and stooping kissed her tenderly. It was her dead son Ralph. She lifted her hand and touched him—

"Ralph! Ralph!" she cried out sharply.

The figure retreated rapidly toward the door; and as it vanished, her ears distinctly caught the sound of a choking sob—

"Ralph! oh, my darling Ralph!"

"What is it, mother?" cried Lilian, springing up. "Have you been dreaming?"

"No, no," exclaimed Mrs. Thornton, who was sitting up in bed, her face and hands damp with a cold perspiration. "He was here a moment ago, I saw him—touched him—as I do you. Oh, Lilian, I shall go mad!"

"Mother, pray be composed," said the girl, while she sprang up and struck a light. "You see there is no one here; and, yes, the door is locked. It was but a disturbed fancy."

"It may seem inexplicable, but I was not asleep. I tell you I saw him as plainly as I see you," sobbed the poor woman.

"And yet, there was no light," said Lilian. "Come, mother, this is a weakness; and, remember, we have need of all our strength."

Her daughter's rigid composure could not fail in part to dispel the illusion; but Mrs. Thornton still hid her face in the pillow, and wept bitterly.

"If he can come to me so, in sleep," she said, "I would never wish to wake again."

"Ah!" thought Lilian, "she has no regard for me!" and she hardened her heart still more.

The life here was unmarked by any event for some weeks to come. Once Dr. Chester had found Lilian alone; and pleading his long devotion, of which he had given ample proofs, entreated her to become his wife.

She had interrupted him with a look that seemed akin to fear—

"Don't!" she cried, wringing her hands, "Don't talk to me of love. I can't bear it! Indeed I cannot. George, you can forget me, and you must; my very name is a disgrace.

"If it were possible for that to be so, and you know it is not, there is yet no reason why you may not change it to mine!" he answered earnestly. "I swear to you, I have no aim or object in life, but to win your heart back to me, and try to atone for all the sorrows you have known."

He had taken her hand—but she broke from him impetuously.

"Don't tell me now! I shall despise you if you persist?" she exclaimed, with bitterness. "I am in no mood to listen, I tell you, to the pleadings of love."

"And the longer you cherish these unnatural feelings, the more warped must your nature become, Lilian—"

"Hush! For God's sake, hush!"

"My darling—"

She had gone out and slammed the door between them. And George Chester walked away with a heavy sigh.

"But for the knowledge that this must all end soon, I too, should go mad," he said. "Poor Lily, poor darling, if all these horrors had to be gone over, how doubly harrowing would they be. For her sake, if for none other, I must be guarded."

Lilian Thornton's burdens were none the less easy that she seemed to herself to be required to sustain them almost alone. Mrs. Thornton's anxiety for her daughter had caused that lady to disguise her own feelings until one could scarcely have imagined they had been stirred to any considerable degree. Dr. Chester, with the philosophy of strong and resolute natures, often assumed a cheerfulness, which no one but himself could tell how far he was from feeling; and Mary—Mary, upon whom the blow should have fallen most durably, was really the first to rally. The color came back to her cheeks, and elasticity to her tread. Even Lilian had looked at her more than once in incredulous astonishment.

But now if there were mysteries in the little household, they were not confined to Dr. Chester alone.

His anxiety for Lilian daily increased.

At first avoiding the very windows, through fear of being stared at by strangers, she had now taken to going out on the streets alone, and was frequently absent for whole hours—sometimes even until after nightfall.

The mother remonstrated.

"Let me have my way without questioning. In that lies the only hope for me," she had said; and believing for a while, they forbore to molest her.

One evening, however, when she had remained out even later than usual, and her mother's anxiety had increased to positive alarm, the latter, on going to the door, beheld her daughter coming up under the lamp-light accompanied by a man, who was evidently not Dr. Chester.

The man looked across at the house just then, and seeing the figure in the door, turned abruptly away. Lilian came on quickly, opened the little gate and entered.

"My child, how can you have the heart to alarm me so! And who was that stranger but now in your company? You must tell me at once."

"Mother, mother!" cried the girl, "you dare not question me like that! Do you think any motive that might influence other women—women of the world—could control my actions? Think me guilty of conspiracies, schemes, plots, anything that a man might dare, but nothing to which a woman would have to stoop."

"Then you can still tell me in whose company my daughter can trust herself at this late hour?"

"He has the greater faith to trust himself in mine," she answered, with a bitter smile. "And yet I may tell you. Only, if you ever wish to look upon my face again, do not let George Chester know. Mother! swear to me that you will not think me mad, that you will not consult him of all men in the world. I am calm—at least I am deliberate, you know. You must swear to keep my secret."

"Anything, my daughter, if I may but win your confidence."

"Then, mother, mark me, it is to be a secret from Mary and from—from Dr. Chester. The man who came with me to the gate was one you already know."

"His name then?"

"Lewis Hartman."

"Lilian, why is this?" cried her mother, "You alarm me, my child. Lewis Hartman is not a good man, I am persuaded; and his name has already been coupled unkindly with yours."

"Pshaw," exclaimed the girl, "the low gossip of a slanderous clown. I had forgotten that. And, mother, Lewis Hartman is my friend."

"Friend!" exclaimed her mother, bitterly; "as you value your eternal welfare, do not trust him, he is false and treacherous to the heart's core. I have heard your brother speak of him. Ask George Chester his opinion of that man."

"I tell you George must not know," urged Lilian. "Once more, mother. I bid you forget that I am a woman. He has undertaken to help me in the discharge of the only solemn duty left to me in life, and I trust him in that. Do not question me only believe that my eyes are open. Where is Dr. Chester?"

"He is still out."

"And Mary?"

"In her room."

"Then come with me to mine, mother. I have to change my dress."

Mrs. Thornton followed her daughter mechanically into their chamber. Distress was written upon every feature, but she did not speak again for some moments, in the hope that her daughter would resume the conversation of her own accord.

Lilian, however, seemed entirely absorbed in her own thoughts, and now stood before the mirror combing out her long, luxuriant hair, and arranging it in braids above her queenly brow. There was care in this, too, her mother noticed, as though she were not indifferent as regarded her appearance.

In all her despair this woman was conscious of her superior beauty, and scornfully proud of it, as so much capital that she might use for the furtherance of her plans.

Her handsome black dress fitted the erect figure with a faultlessness that should have made the fortune of her modiste.

"Do you expect him here to-night?" Mrs. Thornton at length ventured to ask.

"Ah, yes," said Lilian, turning suddenly; "that is, I am going out with him, and you must conceal my absence from Mary and George."

"Lily, Lily, where are you going? And why must I conceal it from them? Surely, if your plans are such as a lady may pursue, you need not keep them from your best friend and your dead brother's wife. I cannot permit it."

"But I tell you you must," said Lilian, stepping to the door and locking it, "or I vow to you I will leave this house to-night, in spite of all the restraints you could put upon me, though it should be to find a bed at the bottom of the river beneath the hill yonder. Mother, mother, do not add to my other sins that of disobedience to you. Lend me your countenance. Help me, and I shall never sink. There is one man in this world that I must punish; and as I believe, a woman that I must save."

"Child, you are surely mad. Who is this man and this woman of whom you speak? You are a stranger here. You know no one."

"The woman is known to me only from report," answered Lilian, bitterly. "The man's name will be found written upon my heart when I die. I cannot, must not tell you."

"Then I will summon George Chester, if need be, to prevent your leaving this house. How do I know where you may be blindly taken even this night?" cried Mrs. Thornton, wringing her hands. "I myself will see Lewis Hartman, and tell him that he but confirms my opinion of his unprincipled character by entering into these clandestine arrangements with a girl who is not in her right mind."

"Mother, why will you persist—God forgive me for saying it—in such folly? Look at me. Touch me. You know that you are not more sane this moment than I am. Now listen to me, once for all. The man I speak of has done us and others a great, irreparable wrong, and I wish to punish him, as he has done us, through his affections. I shall use no dishonest means. I can tell you nothing farther now. Very soon I hope to make a full disclosure to you. You must trust me; you must not thwart me, or I shall indeed go mad. Do you think I have forgotten Ralph?"

"No! oh, no!" sobbed the poor mother.

"Or how he died?"

"Ah! spare me!"

"That the sin unforgiven of God—suicide—alone saved him from the gallows?"

"Oh! my God! my God! You will kill me!" and the suffering woman stretched out her hands with a wild look of entreaty.

"Dear, dear mother!" said Lilian, embracing her. "I could not have been so cruel, except to spare you fresh tortures equal to that. With the recollection of a tragedy recent and ghastly as ours has been, you could not think your daughter would be led into any dishonor as a woman?"

"No, no! I should only have dishonored myself by a suspicion."

"Mother, suppose you knew that within an hour's walk of us there lived in all honor and security the men who had been the means of bringing Ralph to his untimely death?"

"The very atmosphere would poison me!" cried the elder woman, with a flash of ligerous ferocity from her dark eyes, "I could put the dagger in your hands with which to slay him, and cry 'shame on you' should your arm falter."

"Then, mother," said the girl, eagerly, "I have found that man. Do not think me mad—I tell you I have walked in the shadow of his form to-day. And to look at him you would think him a king. Men lifted their hats with reverence, and beautiful women showered smiles upon him. Ah! you hate him as I do, I see. And yet that man's death would kill me."

"What!" cried her mother, as though she would strike her to the earth. "You—you—"

"Do not misunderstand me," interrupted the daughter. "If my doubts of a hereafter are correct, death would only bring him oblivion. If the secret that could impart perpetual life here were mine, I would joyfully communicate it to him, and then take away everything that could make life worth having. He has no family ties. Let him love any woman living, and I will teach her to despise him—as I do."

"Then let me help you," said Mrs. Thornton, eagerly. "You could not have a more secret or earnest abettor."

"No, mother," answered Lilian, with a momentary shiver. "If there be a Great Searcher of hearts, and work is to be done here that would seem to take the vengeance from his hands, let me be the one to do it, and not you; but if I have fired you, as I see, and you must take a part, keep my counsel. Hide my workings from Mary, from George, from every living soul. Aid me in every move I make, and do not stop to question me. There is the tea-bell. Say that I have declined everything but a cup of tea, which you will bring me, and that I do not wish to be disturbed. I am going to the theatre to-night."

"To the theatre!" repeated her mother, momentarily aghast.

"Aye! To the theatre! And, now, remember our compact and go in to tea, or Mary will be coming for us."

Mrs. Thornton obeyed promptly, and found, as she expected, both Mary and George in the little supper-room.

"Where is Lilian?" was the simultaneous inquiry.

Excuses were made as directed. Dr. Chester's brow contracted, and Mary rose from her seat.

"Let me take up her supper first, mother. She has been out, and if very tired, is, I dare say, none the less hungry."

Mary had already taken a roll and a bird upon her own plate with every appearance of infinite relish.

Mrs. Thornton looked at her coldly.

"No," she answered. Lilian had been sincere in expressing the wish that no one should disturb her: and that she herself would return in time.

The remainder of the meal was finished in silence. Dr. Chester had hung out his sign here, and before he had quite finished there was a call for him at the door.

"Had you wished to consult me about Miss Lilian?" he asked, looking quite anxiously at Mrs. Thornton, as he turned toward the door.

She answered promptly in the negative. And he took up his hat, and passed out at the door. Just beyond the gate he saw a man lounging against the railing; as he turned in that direction, the person drew back, and began to move away with rapid strides.

"He evidently did not wish to see me," mused George, "and yet was lounging about my premises. I have half a mind to overtake him, and request him to indulge his moonlight meditations elsewhere hereafter."

This would not have been so easy a task as he might have supposed. The man was Lewis Hartman, and of all men in the world he had every reason to avoid George Chester.

Mary's apprehensions for Lilian were easily quieted, and she withdrew to her own room, Mrs. Thornton promising to come in after a while, and sit with her until bedtime.

In the mean time Lilian had donned her wrappings, and slipped out at a side entrance. George Chester would have believed himself mad, had he chanced to return at that moment, and recognizing Lewis Hartman as the man he had chased from his door, beheld Lilian Thornton taking his arm and walking away in the distance; but Dr. Chester was, fortunately or unfortunately, as we shall see, beyond the ken of all that was passing here; and Lilian and her escort moved on for some moments in profound silence.

The former was the first to speak.

"You are quite sure he will be there?"

"You know my reasons for thinking so," answered Hartman. "I was in his office when he sent his boy off with a note to Miss Nina Alvarez—as I saw while it lay before me; and I showed you her answer, which he carelessly threw upon his desk, and which I was fortunate enough to secure, while he stepped into his private room. And I have secured seats so near his, that you may touch him with your fan."

"You have ascertained that she is really as wealthy as she is beautiful and accomplished?"

"Beyond all conjecture. Her jewels to-night will tell you that; and you will see foreign ambassadors and nobles gazing at her in undisguised admiration. He will be the most highly honored of all; but you will see how composed he can be. The man has an air as though he were born to the purple."

"And yet he shall wear the willow—as I do!" cried the girl. "Let me but see them together, and I can tell if he loves her."

"Most probably he does not," answered Hartman, coolly. "Men devoted to ambitious pursuits, as he is, will hardly find room in their narrow souls for any unselfish affection. He wants her fortune. And as beautiful a woman as that, will flatter his vanity."

"But he must love her. I want him to love her," she half hissed from between her beautiful teeth—as though volition on her part must secure her object—"for then only can he know the full pain of disappointment."

"Is it not strange that realizing this, you cannot feel more for me?" he ventured to say, in half-mournful, half-tender tones.

She straightened herself up until her head was on a level with his own, and flashing anger spoke in every feature.

"Are you trying to force me to turn off from you, and find my way back home alone?" she cried. "I have told you that I would!"

"Forgive me!" he pleaded, with bowed head. "I was mad. I swear to you I will remember for the future. My only wish is to serve you; and I would coin my heart's blood to do that. Come, I hear the orchestra playing. Let us press on, and you will behold your enemy, in all the proud consciousness of a brilliant future just opening before him."

"Ah, a relentless Nemesis is on his track. Let us see if he cannot be overtaken, and dragged down."

No other word was spoken; and they had now approached the public entrance of the fashionable theatre on A— — street. The lights flamed out brilliantly, and this unknown woman coming suddenly into the glare, seemed to the by-standers a very Juno.

The band played a gushing overture as she passed quickly on to her seat, but she did not hear it. She might have caught the query, taken up on all sides—"Who is she?" but her thoughts were far otherwise engaged. Lewis Hartman heard it with infinite relish, and bent over her with an air that escaped her, but which he did not intend the audience should misunderstand.

Lilian Thornton's bosom was heaving, and a flush, like that of a consuming fever, burning upon her cheeks.

Almost simultaneously with her a couple had entered the seats just to her left. For one instant the taper fingers of her right hand were pressed over her heart as though to stay a spasm of pain, and then she looked up. And there, before her, sat Earle Templeton, smiling proudly down upon a beautiful woman, all in a shower of golden hair, at his side.

CHAPTER XX.

NINA ALVAREZ.

"A woman that no man living with a heart in his bosom could fail to love."

This was Lilian Thornton's joyful, but involuntary comment, as she looked at her.

An underskirt of pure white Lyons silk, a low tunic of pale blue satin, such as rarely came even from the looms of Antwerp, covered with English point lace, and looped at regular intervals with jewels, each of which the pretty actress just coming upon the stage would have regarded as a fortune. A collar of pearls and diamonds, that even the most avaricious of her admirers might have wished back in the depths of the ocean because they covered so much of a throat—fairer, with its sea-shell pinkness, than all pearls; and a coronet with jewels that the queen of England might have worn. These were a part of the outward adornments of the woman, while the sculptured face and form, with the soul that breathed through them, were beyond the power of tongue or pencil to portray.

"So young too, and so little known here," thought Lilian, as she gazed. "Fresh from the schools, with her Spanish blood and her ethereal, uncharacteristic beauty; and that he should have had the first chance at her affections. What if after all there should be no means to separate them, and he should win and wear the prize in spite of me!" her white teeth were set, and the breath came in gasps. "If that should be the case, God help me. I should murder her."

Whether Lilian Thornton would ever have executed this terrible threat or not, had circumstances seemed to require it for the furtherance of her wishes, we are unable to say. Six months before there lived not a gentler or more womanly woman, one who would have felt a deeper horror at the thought of crime, and yet, of just such stuff are formed the Charlotte Cordays, and two-thirds of the fearless assassins in the world of real or fancied wrongs and attempted retribution.

Looking attentively as she did, for the play had no attractions for her, she fancied that she could distinctly read more than a passing interest in the look with which this lovely girl lifted her eyes ever and anon to the face of her escort; but to her, as to others, Earle Templeton's face was a mask. Whatever he might feel, polite attention was all that could be read in his manner. His grand, strong face had no softening, caught no light as he returned her gaze.

Deeply absorbed in the study of his features, Lilian failed to observe that she had already attracted the attention of the young lady at his side.

"Señor Templeton, look!" said Miss Alvarez, in clear distinct tones, "There is a beautiful woman on your left, who is she?"

Templeton turned slowly. Lilian's eyes were fixed upon the stage, but her ears were still strained to hear.

"She might be pretty if one could confess any other type of beauty than your own," he said, in the low, musical tone peculiar to him. "And I regret my ignorance, even of her name, since it prevents me from being able to inform you."

Other conversation of a less personal nature fell on her ear, and still she gave them her undivided attention even while she felt constrained to address some remarks to her escort. She was glad however when the curtain fell, and they arose to go."

"You do not wish to follow them?" said Hartman.

"Of course not to-night, but we must keep careful watch—you of him, and I of her, from to day. She is faultlessly beautiful, and I have no longer any fears; he will, he does love her."

"And he did not recognize you?"

"No. From my knowledge of the man I was sure he would not; so much the better; but she will as certainly know me when she sees me again."

"You will see her again, then?"

"Yes, when my plans are matured."

Again under the starlight, they hurried on in silence.

"I shall pass Athol's corner to-morrow evening at eight," said Lilian, as she reached their postern gate. "If you have anything to say to me, join me there."

"I will; good-night."

She opened the gate softly, and went in. She felt wearied and depressed in no ordinary degree. The strong restraint continually put upon her feelings, was beginning to tell upon her health.

She looked up at George Chester's window, and saw a faint light burning there.

"Poor darling! poor darling!" she murmured, drearily. "I loved him with the only love I should ever have been able to give to mortal man, and yet Ralph, Ralph, I would sacrifice even him to avenge you."

She had passed into the shadow of the little porch, and was reaching for the latch of the door, when it opened softly of its own accord. Had her mother sat up to wait for her?

It was a man's figure in the entry before her.

"George?" she whispered, timidly.

It was not George. As the figure turned quickly, the face was distinctly outlined against a distant window. The eyes were fixed mournfully upon her. Her own were dilated with horror. The bell from a neighboring steeple struck twelve. If the dead ever return to earth this was the time.

"Ralph, Ralph," she wailed, stretching out her arms; but the figure had vanished, and she had sunk down in the door shaking as with an ague.

When she staggered into her own room some moments later, her mother sprang up wild with alarm.

"Lilian, my child, what have you done? It must have been a fearful deed. Oh, my God, it is terrible to look at you."

"I have done nothing—nothing but look at a farcical play," she said, while her teeth chattered in spite of her. "But I think I am very ill," and she fainted in her mother's arms.

In the meantime Lewis Hartman had again turned cautiously toward the front of the house, and as he pulled his hat over his brows, lest the light from the street-lamps should reveal his features to eyes that he might wish to avoid, to his astonishment he beheld Dr. Chester standing upon the upper step of the little portico with Mary Thornton in the shadow of the pillar beside him.

"And you will go out again at this late hour," she said.

"Yes, dear child," he answered, tenderly. "I must go. But I think I can assure your gentle heart that it will soon be over. In the meantime I have only your loving promises to sustain me."

"And you may rely upon them," she answered, fervently. "Ah, George, if any one on earth ever had reason to love you, and pray for your happiness, I have. Good-night." She leaned forward and touched his upturned brow with her lips. Then as Dr. Chester descended the steps, she glided softly back and closed the door. At that moment a startling cry broke from her. She reopened the door, and called out eagerly—

"George, George, come back! Lily is ill—is dying," and with the swiftness of the wind George Chester turned on his steps and followed her.

"Ah," muttered Lewis Hartman from the shadow of the tree behind which he stood; "Miss Lilian probably came upon these lovers unobserved, as I did, while they were billing and cooing; and her own devotion for this pretty doctor being so great, she was unable to stand the test, and has fainted through jealousy. Could anything be more fortunate. I must strike while the iron is hot, and if Lewis Hartman is not successful, let him be like King Midas indeed, and have an ass's ears appended to his cranium."

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 10.)

☞ Mrs. John A. Fisher, of Springfield, her mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and great-great-grandmother were born on December 13th, and still more astonishing, when Mrs. Fisher was twenty years old her mother was forty, her grandmother sixty, her great-grandmother eighty, and her great-great-grandmother, if she had been alive, would have been just one hundred.

BEYOND JORDAN.

BY JOAQUIN MILLER.

And they came to Him, mothers of Judah,
Dark-eyed and in splendor of hair,
Bearing down over shoulders of beauty,
And bosoms half hidden, half bare.

And they brought Him their babes, and besought Him,
Half-kneeling with supplicant air,
To bless the brown cherubs they brought Him,
With holy hands laid in their hair.

Then reaching His hands, He said, slowly,
"For such is my kingdom;" and then
Took the brown little babes in the holy
White hands of the saviour of men;

Held them close to His heart and caressed them,
Put His face down to theirs as in prayer,
Put their hands to His neck, and so blessed them,
With baby hands hid in His hair.

A HIDDEN WRONG;

OR,

Too Trusting and Too Fair.

BY MRS. ELIZABETH MORRISON.

CHAPTER XXXV.

MOLLY'S LAST JOB.

When Heatherton, following Mrs. Lester, entered the lofty and elegantly furnished reception-room on the first floor of the house, he found a woman's figure cowering and crouching in a shuddering heap in one of the satin-covered chairs.

At the sound of their footsteps she raised her head and showed the bloodless and haggard face of Molly Dance, strangely altered in the last few hours, and bearing the impress of a terrible story nearly told.

She fixed her luminous eyes, that shone like funeral lamps beneath her black brows, arching in strange contrast to her death-white cheeks, upon the young doctor, and said in a voice that seemed to come from a distance, it was so faint and muffled—

"I know you, sir, you are the one who was so good to poor Lucy when she lay sick down town at the old place."

"Yes, certainly; and I remember your face there, but it is greatly changed," cried the doctor, eagerly, "are you not ill?"

"Never mind me, it is about her I come; my time's up soon, I'm past saving, but she may be rescued, it is not too late, only be quick."

"Lucy! the young lady who was carried away so suddenly, whom I afterward saw at her own home, and who lately disappeared from it again?" the doctor asked, as if scarcely daring to believe the good news without close questioning.

"Yes, the same," Molly gasped, pressing her hand upon her bosom, and growing even yet more ghastly pale, if that were possible.

Mrs. Lester ran hastily to the door of the adjoining dining-room, and pouring out a glass of wine hurriedly, held it to the lips of the fainting woman.

Molly revived, but did not touch it.

"I've tasted my last of all such drinks," she said, faintly, "but I'm better now, and can do my errand."

The doctor procured a glass with a few spoonfuls of water, into which he dropped some amber-colored liquid from a small phial he carried with him.

"This will do better, my poor friend," he said, gently, and giving him a thankful look, she drained the glass.

"I came to this good lady to-night, because I remember her noble kindness with all the gratitude a lost creature like me knows how to feel," she said, speaking with more distinctness; "not that I expected her to be in any wise connected with the friends of the poor young lady that I want rescued from the clutches of such as have ruined me.

"Not very long ago I fell in crossing the street, it was before I had my heavy sickness, and I was weak and dizzy, and her carriage was rushing by me as I dropped.

"She looked out, and seeing me lying on the stones, alighted and came to my help, like the true and noble lady she is.

"Nor did she turn from me with shrinking or disgust, when she found that I was the miserable wretch I am. She offered me help, and showed me the way back to a decent life, promising to make it easy for me if I would only try it. She came to me again and again, while I lay in the hospital getting my shoulder set after my fall, and if she had met me a single year earlier, it might not have been too late."

"Nor is it yet too late, my poor woman," Mrs. Lester urged earnestly, "your kind solicitude for the good of this poor young lady, proves that you have not lost your native purity of heart, however heavily your sad life has been sullied by misery and temptation."

Molly broke in upon her merciful words with a passionate wail.

"You do not know what I have done, if you did you would shudder to look at me," she moaned. "I have risked all, and lost all, my deeds are on my head, and I must bear the doom I have earned and merited.

"But of Lucy—she is now at Todd's, and I have the key of the room she is locked up in; also one that will admit you to the house by the small side door. I am sure they are right, for I took them from her jailor," she continued with meaning emphasis and a deep shudder. "She has been in training to do the work of an impostor, and I have been keeping her in sight, and pretending to join in their plots, while I waited for a chance to liberate her, and restore her to her friends."

She stretched her trembling hand out, with the two keys in it, toward Heatherton.

"Will you take these, and let the lady come with me; there is something else to be done, and only she can do it."

"I will, and with Heaven's help, Molly, you shall be saved, if there is any power or strength in the gratitude you have awakened to-night in my heart, and that of my friend to whom I go now to relate what you have told me."

She shook her head, but said in a broken voice—

"If such a wretched creature could bless any one, I would bless and thank you."

Then as if remembering something suddenly, she said, "Be very gentle and persuasive with the girl, her brain is not right, and if you alarm her she may become wild and give you trouble. Remember that she was honorably and truly married to a—a—man who has gone to answer for that, and many other evil deeds; she was, and has always been grossly deceived, and since her eyes were opened to the truth of the terrible life to which he willingly condemned her, her reason has been shaken, and she is in a sort of stupefaction."

"Yes, yes, I will remember all you say," Heatherton assured her, and waiting only to receive a repetition of the directions that she had first given him to Todd's locality, he hastened to join his wondering and somewhat impatient friends in the library.

Judge Lester and Eugene listened to the doctor's graphic and hurried narration of what he had just heard from poor Molly with different but strong emotions.

To the elder man, an opportunity to help and succor a needy or suffering fellow-creature was always a strong and ardent impulse, and added to this was the knowledge gained by slow degrees and close observation that the Barton family to which this injured girl belonged, were the most valued friends of his dear boy Eugene, who had become to the childless judge almost a son, since the day he interposed his life to save that of the older man.

Stirred by these feelings, he was already on his feet wrapping his cloak round him, and taking from a secret drawer in his desk a small loaded pistol, in case of opposition, when the doctor concluded his story.

Eugene was speechless with excitement. A thousand thoughts thronged his brain, as he tried to connect Heatherton's explanation of Marian's separating herself from him, with this sad story of Lucy's misfortunes; and despite the sorrow and anxiety of such a mission, his young heart bounded with unwonted hope, as he hastened to join his friends on their expedition to "Todd's Crib."

When they reached the lower floor, and Judge Lester called to a man-servant to give him some directions for the night, they ascertained, to their astonishment, that Mrs. Lester had gone away in a close carriage, accompanied by Molly, a few moments before.

The judge stood irresolute for an instant, not quite assured as to his wife's safety in such company; but Dr. Heatherton eagerly assured him of the girl's devotion to the noble lady, who had tried to be her friend, and they waited no longer, but started forth into the midnight streets.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

CONCLUSION.

Dark and silent loomed the great, dirty old house—known as Todd's Crib to the initiated—that cool spring night, as the three friends quietly approached it, and reconnoitred on all sides, for the door to which the small key Heatherton carried ready in his hand, should afford them entrance.

It was soon found, and proved to be an unpretending affair, opening direct upon a dark and narrow stairway, up which they crept, keeping Molly's directions in view, until they came to a square landing, with two doors facing them on either hand.

Undetermined as to which was the right one, the doctor, who kept in the advance, stopped to consider, but Eugene had already decided the matter, for the one on the right stood slightly ajar, a faint light burned within, and on a small table where it stood, lay a little black lace scarf, that he had watched Marian set for her Sister Lucy.

"This is the place," he whispered, "but where—oh, where is she?" and his heart sank with his tones, which fell in hopeless distress as his eyes showed him the chamber to be deserted.

It was very dark and bare, and had no signs of a woman's presence, except a handsome and elaborately trimmed suit of silk and velvet, that lay on the back of a chair near the table, and appeared perfectly new and very splendid.

A hat and plumes, and various other parts of the same outfit, were scattered near this singularly rich robe, and formed a strange contrast in their gorgeous style and material, to the dingy place in which they lay.

"This is no doubt the masquerading dress in which the poor girl was destined to perform," said Heatherton—and then he echoed his friend's inquiry, "Oh, where is she?"

"Here is a letter!" exclaimed Eugene, "a letter addressed to Ralph Velour, and signed by Lucy's name."

They crowded round him to read it, and found that it was written in pencil, and evidently in great agitation of mind.

It ran thus:—

"To-night I seem to have awakened, as from some horrible dream. I remember where I am, and what I was—and worst of all, I now know and fully realize what you are.

"The revelation, when it first came, was too much for my poor brain. I heard without understanding; I was stunned by a weight of horror that held my reason prisoner, and I moved and breathed like one under the influence of some terrible spell.

"An hour ago, I overheard *that man* instructing poor Pat in the details of a shameful robbery. Their voices came to me as yours did, when I heard you tell the woman who you were and why you had brought me here. The sounds roused me, and woke my heart, my brain, my conscience. And I go now to disclose and prevent their black deed—and then throw myself in penitent sorrow at my mother's feet.

"My soul grows strong with its purpose—my limbs that were heavy as lead, now move with tireless strength. I could fly, I could face danger, death, anything to wipe out the memory of the past, to scatter and forever destroy my miserable, my fatal delusion."

"It was a sudden and preternaturally excited moment of reason, in which this was written," Heatherton said. "Poor Molly warned me, that we should find her mind affected by the disclosure of this wretch's perfidy—and as she here explains, the circumstance of overbearing a plot between some of the vile inmates of this place to commit a robbery, has aroused her dormant faculties, and in the impulse of the moment she has found both strength and courage."

"See here," cried Eugene, who had been turning the paper over on all sides and closely examining it; "see here, it is scrawled with a trembling hand, on this side of the note—

"'Not to forget—it is Mrs. Blanchard's house, on the east side of Lexington Square, third in the Terrace—to be entered after one o'clock at night, by the small window with a grating, which has been filed away. They drop into a cellar, opening in a wine-vault, and through that go up the stairs into a butler's pantry and silver closet.'

"And here it breaks off abruptly, as if her information failed at this point; it is Jim Ball's work; I recognize the plan; and he is after that paper you spoke of, Judge. Come quickly—it is one o'clock this moment, and not an instant is to be lost."

They had moved noiselessly and spoken in whispers from the first, but Mother Worthy was a light sleeper, and already Eugene detected an unusual movement in the chambers beyond.

"They are coming; we have no time for a parley," he cried. "Come quickly."

He was already at the foot of the narrow staircase, and his friends soon joined him in the open street, along which he hurried at a tremendous pace in the direction of his old home.

Nothing in the outer appearance of Mrs. Blanchard's dwelling indicated anything unusual taking place within.

Not a light was in view; the great brown structure seemed, like its neighbors, to enclose only peaceful slumberers within its spacious walls, and when the friends stood for a moment contemplating it, the judge almost doubted the possibility of Jim's having carried out his design.

"Yes, the window irons are open," said Eugene, returning from a hurried inspection of the narrow side-passage leading up to the garden. "Follow me; I still have the key to the verandah door."

In a few moments, and with the least possible sound, they had divested themselves of their boots, entered the door that opened first into a conservatory, and thence into the family breakfast-room.

Groping in the darkness they ascended the main stairway, and had gained the second floor before they encountered anything on which to found a suspicion of the presence of robbers in the house.

Just at the turn of the third story stairs a gleam of light shot athwart their way, and they moved back in silence and paused breathlessly till it disappeared.

Then they saw, as they stole upward, that the man and his young companion were in the large back room once occupied by the artist, and that, as they easily distinguished through the open door, both were busily engaged in rifling the contents of the drawers of an escritoire, and carefully examining its papers by the aid of a dark lantern.

So busy and absorbed were they in their occupation, that neither seemed aware that the room contained any occupant save themselves, and yet on a lounge almost within their touch slumbered a young girl of rare beauty, who from her dress and appearance seemed to have dropped asleep while gazing on a picture on the opposite wall.

Her hand still supported her cheek, and only that her tired head had fallen forward, she would still have seemed to be watching the uncertain light shooting and flickering over the beautiful face of the picture.

As Heatherton ascended the stairs he had fancied once that a figure flitted by him, but attributing it to his excited imagination, dismissed the idea.

Now he plainly saw the same figure crouching behind the sofa on which the sleeper lay, and recognized it at the same glance as Lucy Barton's, though her face seemed, when revealed by the lantern's gleam, to belong in its excessive pallor to the dead rather than the living.

As all three of them, in their concealment at the door, became aware of these facts, they mutually signalled each other as to their course of action, and had already made themselves in order for attack, when their design was interrupted by the sudden appearance of a silent figure all in white at the farther door.

They saw her plainly, and Eugene caught his breath at the sight, for he recognized Mrs. Blanchard in her character of sleep-walker, and her fixed eyes and stalking movements brought back to his excited mind the first time he had so beheld her, and the blight and gloom her words had spread over his boyish life.

But not only did they see her, the boy nimbly sorting the contents of the writing-desk in the corner fronting her, spied the figure also, and uttered a smothering gasp of terror as she came slowly but steadily toward him.

She was under the picture on which the sleeping girl had been gazing, and she raised her stiff, automaton-like hand toward it, when Pat's gasping cry attracted Jim's attention. He, too, looked up, and became deadly, awfully white at the sight.

Still the arms rose in their strange, spectre-like motion, and he muttered an imprecation expressive of terror and seized his pistol.

"Hold!" shouted Eugene, in wild alarm. It was too late, the ball whizzed through the air, and the white figure and the picture-frame crashed to the floor together!

Lights and servants only added disorder to the terrible scene.

Jim, the housebreaker, escaped by knocking down Judge Lester and firing again at Heatherton as they strove to arrest his progress.

Little Pat never attempted to stir, but crouched in a corner, surveying the scene with wide, dilating eyes; while poor young Violet, awakened to sudden dread and terror, clung round her new-found brother's neck and cried—

"What was it? Oh, who was that dreadful man that fled away? And why does mamma lie so still upon her face on the floor yonder?"

They took her away, striving as best they could to hide the full extent of the painful truth from her, but what she knew was too much for her sensitive young heart, and before daybreak she lay in a raging fever, watched over by Heatherton and poor Lucy Barton.

Poor Lucy's object, as she afterward explained, had been to reach one of the bed chambers and noiselessly rouse the family to resist the robbers; but she had wandered about in the dark till she caught sight of Violet asleep in her brother's deserted room, and she had crept in there, determined to save the child by the sacrifice of her own life, if need be.

Mrs. Blanchard's life was extinct when she was raised from the floor on which she had fallen, carrying Eugene's picture of the girl whose life she had endeavored to poison, with her.

Jim Ball's shot, fired in terror of what seemed to him a ghostly apparition, had done its work, and her busy brain and pitiless heart had ceased to plot forever.

In her dead hand was found Eugene's mother's work—the paper with the family pedigree, proofs of descent and secrets all perfect, as she herself in a state of somnambulism had removed them from the locket and hidden them behind the picture of Marian in Eugene's room.

Thus her death disclosed a secret her life could not have revealed.

When Eugene left the desolated home of empty splendor for his newer and happier abode with true friends that morning, it was with a bowed and humbled spirit, from which loathing and resentment had passed away at the sight of retributive justice.

Mr. Blanchard had left the city some days before, the servants said, intending, as he announced, to cross the ocean and make a short continental tour for his failing health; but as he never returned, it appeared that he had suspected the closing influences that enrounded his plotting and scheming wife, and being unwilling to face a denouement, had secured such funds as were available and departed on their strength.

The body of the murdered woman lay properly cared for, in the great house, that henceforth could never be a place of peace or joy to Eugene, who determined as he drove away to the Lesters' cheerful home, to dispose of it and its miserable memories and associations, never to be linked again to either.

There was something more awaited him on his arrival—the interests of that eventful night were not yet over, and Mrs. Lester, looking pale and worn from sleepless excitement, yet calm and gravely cheerful in its results, met him at the door and took his hands tenderly in hers.

"There is some one here, whom I might keep a secret until you have both had rest and refreshment, my dear boy," she said, with a quiet smile, "but I believe you and she will be able to understand the soft-hearted impulse that urges me to unite you at once. Come this way, Marian, my darling girl, here is your happy lover!"

And not waiting to hear the poor artist's incredulous cry of joy, or behold the fainting girl clasped rapturously to his breast, the judge's lady discreetly retired, leaving an explanation until joyful surprise gave place to calm delight.

Then Marian told her lover, who assured her between every sentence of the impossibility of any earthly consideration dividing his love from her, as long as her heart was true to him, how dread of her poor sister's misfortunes being misrepresented to him, had in part influenced her renunciation of his love; but that fear lest his enemies might increase their persecution, if she continued to meet him, had been her strongest motive.

Making light of her own trials, she dwelt chiefly on her poor sister's undeserved misery, of which she had been now fully informed through Molly's agency, and in a concise and hasty way brought her story to the scene of the ring, which she explained as part of the plot to trap her to the empty house.

From thence she had been carried, she did not know how, into a comfortable room next door, where a colored woman kindly watched over her, until Mrs. Lester came and brought her home to this dear, charming place, taking care to relieve her mind by sending to inform her mother and brother of her whereabouts.

She knew nothing of Velour's death, nor Molly—and concluded by falling again in tears of thankful joy on her lover's breast.

"We have Lucy back again, and the dear lady tells me your right to your own name and property is quite established, and that your dear young sister whom I love and long to see is now in your care, and oh, dear Eugene, what more is there to wish for?"

"Nothing, nothing!" murmured the grateful lover, and he did not mar that happy hour by narrating the scene that had preceded it, so Marian was for the time spared the knowledge of two violent deaths.

But there was yet enough of care and trouble in Marian's path to remind her that there must always be earthly thorns among the most heavenly roses.

That night of rational but most excited feeling was poor Lucy's last conscious one for many a weary day.

With morning's light came strong symptoms of brain fever, which rapidly increased, and the return of evening found her in a raving delirium.

Marian took her place at her bedside as nurse, and Violet, after her mother's funeral, seemed to forget her own sorrow in assisting the devoted sister in her loving vigils.

Tender forethought saved the delicate girl from a knowledge of how her mother had died; she had often been attacked with spasms of the heart, and they allowed her to think that one of these had proved fatal.

She mourned quietly, but not uselessly, and soon developed with unusually rapid growth, into a fair and blooming womanhood.

But that was some years later, all the events of the dreary past had faded out in the joyous present then, and poor Molly's gloomy seed sown in blood, had borne fair and fragrant fruit.

The unhappy creature lay under the same sod that covered the body of the man who died by her hand, for she had been found next morning at daybreak, lying stiff and stark in death on his cold bosom, and thus it fell out that according to Eugene's wish, Lucy's miserable husband was laid in his last sleep by the side of his unhappy murderess.

Poor Lucy knew not and never knew how he came to his end; when she recovered at last it was to a high and holy life of noble deeds and blessed works.

She shared her sister's home and wealth, and the poor loved her, and little children blessed her name.

But Lucy never married again, that part of life was over for her, still she was not gloomy, nor did she shrink from the sight of others' joy—on the contrary, when as years went by and Violet became a lovely woman, Max Heatherton sought and won her heart and hand, Lucy was the one who dressed her for the bridal, and compared her to Marian, whose matronly beauty was not dimmed by contact with domestic life, but still shone pre-eminent to the gaze of her adoring husband and sister.

"I think Violet is the most beautiful bride I ever saw, except Marian," Lucy said.

"Always except Marian," cried Eugene, "she has no peer as wife."

"Or sister," cried Lucy.

"Or daughter either," remarked Mrs. Barton, who was one of the easily moulded kind of women who take their form and color from surrounding circumstances, and in her present affluence adored the son-in-law she had been bribed to abuse and spy upon by his enemy, the dead and forgotten Mrs. Blanchard.

Judge and Mrs. Lester considered themselves the adopted parents of Eugene and Marian, and the young people in their turn, regarded the noble couple with the grateful tenderness of son and daughter.

Allan's new-born independence of spirit and earnest energy of character for a time resisted all patronage, but much aid may be given in a secret way, and young Mr. Barton's unprecedented rise and success in life could only be explained by the influence of his generous friends and relatives.

Eugene gave his mother-in-law a beautiful home of her own, and in it lived Allan and Lucy; while Violet before her marriage, vibrated between Judge Lester's, her brother's and the Bartons' residence, finding in each a loving welcome and bringing sunshine in her presence.

Eugene had made her legally his sister, and shared his wealth with her, at first much to Heatherton's objections, but finding it in nowise interfered with his suit, the good doctor submitted to good fortune very graciously.

Lucy undertook the care and reformation of little Pat, with such fervent faith and determination that it is a comfort to think she was not disappointed, and Allan has seen him practically established in business with every prospect of success.

Old Rosetta also was cared for, but Meg Worthy and her companion, Jim Ball, never crossed the path of the happy family, and nothing occurred in their future lives to remind them of that dark and dreary period, when such wretched creatures exerted an influence over their existence.

THE END.

☞ The Paris police were recently ordered to shave off their imperials. They looked too much like a relic of Napoleonism.

The Minister's Choice.

A TRUE STORY.

BY MARK EDWARDS.

Mrs. Selinda Black was in a fever of delight.

"The new minister was here to-day, Liddy," she said to her sister, "and engaged board. He is *so* handsome. Now, if you could only set your cap for him and catch him, it would be grand. A minister's wife, Liddy! How it would set you up! and the rest of us, too!"

Miss Liddy Robbins simpered as daintily as she could, and affected hopelessness of ever achieving such a success matrimonially, while an involuntary start of surprise and a quick, eager lighting of her eyes proclaimed that she was secretly aspiring notwithstanding.

She was not less than thirty years of age, of large, coarse person, with an innate vulgarity evident in her whole appearance. She was richly dressed, but not in good taste—refinement was wanting, and the show of means she endeavored to make was false, for her income was quite limited. But she lived board-free with her sister, and expended most of her money on her personal adornment. Both women were socially ambitious, and aspired to stand high in their circle and set.

They kept one servant, a sweet-faced, intelligent American girl, who had found it impossible on account of her suffering health to support herself by her needle, and therefore had bravely undertaken housework. She had come under the fairest promises to Mrs. Black, but had been compelled to endure many indignities, for both her mistress and Miss Robbins felt her gentleness and refinement a constant reproach to their own pretension. They, therefore, delighted to show her that she was only a servant-girl.

The young minister came—a modest, quiet-mannered man, whose cheerful gravity was wonderfully winning to all. Miss Robbins did her utmost to gain his favor, but failed in making herself as agreeable to him as she desired. Though always courteous to her, he was instinctively repelled by her vanity and fawning adulation.

It was days after his arrival at Mrs. Black's that Mr. Emory obtained his first glimpse of Lucy Gray. He had been conscious of a gentle-moving presence in the kitchen, and had wondered how it was that his landlady's servant kept herself so entirely out of the range of his vision. But Lucy had received her instructions, which were not to appear in Mr. Emory's presence during meal time, as he had given Mrs. Black to understand (so she said) that he disliked the attendance of a domestic at the table.

"I'll wait on him myself," said Mrs. Black, "which I wouldn't do for nobody but a minister."

And Lucy, thinking that a minister must be a very superior and extraordinary person indeed—far, far above herself—was careful not to intrude.

The truth was that both Mrs. Black and her sister were afraid that Lucy's deft and dainty attendance at the table would be observed by Mr. Emory, to the admiration of such unusual efficiency. But of course two persons—even if one be servant and the other guest—cannot long remain under the same roof without seeing and learning something of each other.

Mr. Emory met Lucy in the hall one day, and guessed that she must be the slightly mysterious servant who had been flitting so softly about up-stairs and down, but heretofore invisible.

She was dressed in the plainest attire, but at a glance the young minister saw the clean white collar and the general neatness of her appearance.

He smiled and spoke a pleasant word—recognizing her as a human being. She blushed and started also—the word of greeting was so unexpected.

"What is the young lady's name whom you have employed?" inquired Mr. Emory of Mrs. Black, the first opportunity he had afterward.

"The young lady!" sneered that amazed individual to herself. "Lucy Gray," she answered aloud.

"A sweet name and a pretty owner," observed the young minister. "Her face is very intelligent."

"The idea!" thought Mrs. Black, quite shocked, "of a young minister commenting in that way on the appearance of a servant girl!" Aloud she continued, "She is a presumptuous piece, sir; I have great difficulty in teaching her to know her place."

"She surely has not a forward and impertinent look," returned Mr. Emory. "If I ever read refinement and modesty in a countenance I did in hers. Is she not very intelligent?"

How provoking it was to have this youthful reverend express so much interest in a mere servant-girl!

"Oh, *very*," answered Mrs. Black with acerbity. "I wonder she does not offer herself as an instructor."

Her listener caught the sneer.

"I am sure *I* would be glad to be rid of her," Mrs. Black went on to say. Which was now the truth, though she did not explain why.

In her secret annoyance at hearing Lucy so favorably spoken of, Selinda spoke more bitterly than was prudent, and failed to observe the expression of disapprobation that came over Mr. Emory's face as he heard her sarcastic utterances.

"You speak of Lucy's intelligence, Mr. Emory," she again resumed, thinking now to make a grand stroke against the innocent subject of their remarks, "but when yesterday I complained of *enemy* she really did not know what I meant."

The young minister laughed heartily.

"That is refreshing," he said, "I am glad that she confines herself to English."

And then he remembered that he had only the day before heard Mrs. Black speak of a certain fruit as "squinches."

Mr. Emory's interest in Lucy Gray grew steadily from the hour of their first meeting.

In vain did Miss Robbins attempt to blind him to the gentle girl's attractions, in vain did she endeavor to monopolize his attentions. In spite of all the efforts of herself and sister to prevent it, the minister would speak pleasant words to Lucy Gray—kind, encouraging words that were very grateful to her.

He found in her all that in woman is most lovely—grace, modesty, intelligence and rare sweetness of temper and disposition. The matter at last became alarming to Mrs. Black and Miss Robbins.

"Next there will be unpleasant talk," said the latter. "Such intimacy on the part of an unmarried minister is really shameful. What will folks think if they get to know it? Of course Mr. Emory means nothing, and least of all harm; yet it is not the proper thing. You must turn the girl off, Selinda. Why, last night I actually heard Mr. Emory ask her to sing for him."

"And did she do it?"

"You know she *can* sing," whispered Miss Robbins, as if she feared the fact might get out.

"But *did* she?"

"Yes," admitted the other reluctantly.

"Horror! Not in the parlor!"

"No! in the sitting-room. Lucy would not dare to enter the parlor for that purpose."

"Why doesn't Mr. Emory ask *you* to sing, Liddy?" quavered Mrs. Black. "*Do* draw him on; there is nothing at all in the way, I understand, except this presumptuous girl, for whom of course he does not care a penny beyond a transient interest he takes in her pretty ways."

"Clear her out," demanded Miss Robbins. "I hate her anyhow."

"She goes to-morrow," declared Mrs. Black, firmly. "She won't trouble us any more."

The next morning Lucy Gray with weeping eyes and the saddest face went from the house of Mrs. Black, discharged. She did not want to leave, unpleasant as her lot there had in many respects become. She looked upon her dismissal as a disgrace, for she thought a change argued against her. Mrs. Black had the name of being a good mistress, and therefore the fault would be considered Lucy's. Wallace Emory went up to Mrs. Gray's modest but tasteful home that evening. He asked for Lucy.

She came, somewhat wonderingly, and they sat in the little parlor alone. She felt sad, and could with difficulty summon up her usual cheerfulness.

For awhile they talked on various subjects, ignoring the subject of her dismissal from Mrs. Black's. Mr. Emory interested her in more agreeable matters, speaking so kindly and tenderly and sympathetically, that the humiliated girl felt that at least one heart in the world must be large and warm and charitable.

At length he said with some abruptness:

"You left your place at Mrs. Black's, to-day, Lucy?"

"I—I was dismissed, sir," she stammered, with a look of pain.

"And I know *why*, Lucy. It was not your fault, but mine, that caused your discharge."

"Yours, sir!"

"Yes, mine," he said, quietly. "But to make things all right again, what do you say to my finding you another place?"

"I would be very grateful to you, sir," replied she, innocently.

"But you would have to stay for life if you went," he continued, with a look that seemed both grave and glowing.

"For life?" she repeated, wonderingly.

"Yes, Lucy; but I would try to make it a good place—one you would never want to leave."

There was something in his face gloriously suggestive. Lucy seemed faintly to guess his meaning, but started in dismay as if at the absurdity of her wild sweet thought.

"Be my wife, Lucy," said Wallace Emory, in tender entreating words, with a joyous seriousness that showed his truth.

"Oh, Mr. Emory!" she gasped, uncertain of her joy.

"I am in earnest, Lucy."

"But—but you would not marry *me*, sir?"

"If you do or can love me, I will."

Already she did that, unconscious of the fact till now, but the tender, tearful glory of her eyes, the quivering of her pure face and the trembling of her light form, revealed all Wallace Emory cared to know.

Four months later there was a wedding in the parish, and Lucy Gray became the young minister's bride. Many people of course had wondered when it first became known that he had chosen her for his wife, but to all but Mrs. Black and Miss Robbins the matter became clear enough at last. To them it always remained incomprehensible—at least they would not admit that it was not.

To-day Wallace Emory and his sweet wife, beloved of all, live and labor as only hearts truly united and natures truly congenial can.

Freshmen Initiations at Yale College.

BY CHARLES HOLLAND KIDDER.

A most significant evidence of the advance of civilization and humanity may be found in the announcement that "The faculty of Yale College have prohibited freshmen society initiations for this and all succeeding years." To those who are unacquainted with the beauties of the practice thus abolished, this may seem an unwarranted exercise of authority on the part of the Yale faculty. There are many, however, who read this statement with feelings similar to those of graduates of our military and naval schools, when hearing of the stringent measures resorted to in putting down "hazing" at Annapolis and West Point.

The freshmen society initiation at Yale, like many admissions to secret societies, was a side-splitting farce to the *initiators*, and a solemn reality to the *initiated*. So little secrecy was observed, that before 1865, the two rival societies, after using strenuous efforts to capture and "pledge" freshmen for their respective organizations, joined their forces on "initiation night," hired a public hall, and issued tickets of invitation which were freely distributed to outsiders, both in and out of the college. No one can, therefore, be guilty of breach of trust by describing the main features of this interesting and impressive ceremony.

Before their introduction into the hall, the neophytes were confined in a small, dark, unventilated room, the air of which, assisted by the smoke of sundry pipes and cigars, rapidly reached a condition which made the breathers almost envy the occupants of the Black Hole of Calcutta. Two sentries, dressed in diabolical uniform, kept the door and called out the victims separately by name, using the following dreadful formula, "*Ad cruciatum* (to the torture) John Smith." John Smith, on reaching the door, was seized by Satanic attendants, blindfolded, and hurried up a pair of stairs into the hall. Here, be it remarked, an aristocratic element is observable, for the members of the nobility not only escaped without further inconvenience, but were allotted a convenient spot whence they could behold and enjoy the tortures of their less favored brethren. The patent of this nobility was conferred by the possession of a spare ten-dollars to be expended for a supper for two upper-classmen (juniors or seniors). The happy members of upper-*tendom* were seized by friendly hands on entering the hall, their eyes were freed from the bandages, their coats were taken off, turned inside out and put on again, and the turncoats protected by this handsome uniform, were speedily removed to the place of safety above mentioned.

All who were engaged in initiating those whom spunk or impecuniosity forced to submit to the operation were disguised. Devils and satyrs, Turks and Chinamen were there, and some were decked with war-paint and feathers in a style which would have forced the late Captain Jack & Co., of Modoc notoriety, to acknowledge them as men and brethren. Hideous masks of various kinds abounded, and uniformity was observed in only one point—no one could be recognized! The sophomores had good reasons for wishing to conceal their identity. They incurred the risk of being called to account for any special cruelty in using the instruments of torture which were scattered through the brilliantly-lighted hall, surrounded by stony-hearted barbarians, eager to behold the writhings of their victims. Near the door was an inclined plane, leading up to a platform raised eight or ten feet above the floor. The victim, blindfolded, was led up this, and forced to jump from the platform. He was caught upon a stout piece of canvas, held by ten or more strong sophomores, and received a tossing fully equal to that given to Sancho Panza at the wayside inn. Upon one occasion the bandage slipped off from the eyes of a candidate for initiation, just as he was standing on the elevated platform. The sudden shock of finding himself surrounded by yelling demons, the glare of the lights, and the dizziness caused by looking down upon the blanket-tossers, were too much for him—he fainted, and was spared further sufferings.

The modes of torture were as various as ingenious. Some were thrust into a box (one at a time, be it understood, here and elsewhere, each one being separately attended to). This was afterward closed, and attendant imps then pounded on the outside, producing to the unhappy occupant the effect of concentrated thunder. Some were pressingly requested to sit down, and upon doing so, found cool, if not pleasant, quarters in a tub of water. Some were put into a hollow wooden wheel, which was then rolled briskly along, while the "inside passenger" executed involuntary somersaults. The most ingenious of these appliances was the mock guillotine. The knife of this was made of tin, and was caught by a spring a few inches above the neck of the victim, who was fastened under it, face upward, and with uncovered eyes. If he did not know the secret, he suffered all the agonies of a genuine execution; and the gravity of the executioners made the illusion so perfect, that many were seriously alarmed, and apparently thought that their doom was irrevocably sealed.

The feeling between Yale students and the generality of those inhabitants of New Haven who are neither graduates nor under-graduates of the college, is very much like the "town and gown" feuds at Oxford and Cambridge. An amusing incident which occurred at one of the initiations is a proof of this assertion. A young man who had passed a year at another college, came to New Haven to enter Yale, and, as is the custom, pledged himself to join one of the freshmen societies, when he had passed his examination. The examination, however, was not passed, he was not even "conditioned." [A candidate for admission to a college who is "conditioned," is admitted, on the *condition* that he make up certain branches in which he is found deficient, in time to go on with the class.] He was still in New Haven when initiation night came, and was very anxious to learn what mysterious ceremonies were used upon that momentous occasion. Though not naturally brave, Spooney (we must give him some name) walked up the stairs and into the hall where the initiation was in progress. His assurance enabled him to pass the guards, but while he was enjoying the serio comic performance within, one of the sophomores noticed him, and upon inquiring he ascertained that the visitor was not a candidate for initiation. This occurred in the year 1865, when the societies began to initiate separately, in their respective halls, admitting no invited guests outside of their fraternities. The sophomores thought that Spooney was a New Haven boy, whose valor had got the better of his discretion. The cry of "Townie!" [town-boy] was raised, and he was immediately seized by his enraged hosts, and given a practical demonstration of the beauties of initiation. He was tossed in the blanket with angry vehemence. He was politely given a private box where he was treated to a choice specimen of stage thunder. A free ticket was given him as inside passenger in the wooden wheel, wherein, if think he could, he might think of "Fortune's furious, fickle wheel," though not quite ready to say with King Lear: "Smile once more; turn thy wheel!" He was guillotined in the highest style of the art. He was serenaded with "a din to fright a monster's ear," from tin horns, Chinese gongs, and other "callithumpian" instruments. In short, he was treated to all the viands of the feast prepared, together with additional delicacies contrived for his especial benefit, and was at last rescued, more dead than alive, by some compassionate upper classmen who put him out on the stairs and told him to "run for his life." Poor Spooney went down the stairs in two jumps, having escaped with a few bruises, the loss of a new four dollar hat and the sacrifice of one of his coat-tails, which was pulled off in the struggle for his release. From that day to this, he has manifested no more curiosity with reference to Yale "Freshmen Society Initiations."

☞ Some young fellows in Lowell considered it a good joke, at the close of a lecture in Huntington Hall one evening, to raise their umbrellas. The result was that every one who came out with an umbrella, opened it and sailed away amid the cheers of the aforesaid youngsters.

☞ A good lady, who, on the death of her first husband, married his brother, has a portrait of the former hanging in her dining-room. One day a visitor, remarking the painting, asked, "Is that a member of the family?" "Oh, that's my poor brother-in-law," was the ingenious reply.

☞ The position of medical adviser to the tribe of Tulare Indians in California is vacant. The late incumbent had intrusted to his care a number of sick Indians, all of whom unfortunately died, upon which a grand council was held, and the medicine-man was condemned to death and promptly executed.

☞ The postmaster of Ellensburg, Washington Territory, has evidently formed no flattering estimate of the integrity of his brother officials. A recent letter from him to an editor in Olympia exhibited the following unique endorsement on the envelope:—"To any Postmaster. Don't open this, for there is only two bits in it."

☞ The bark Powhatan, which recently arrived at San Francisco, after a long voyage from Buenos Ayres, reports that on July 20, when off Cape Corrientes during a gale, a heavy hail-storm, lasting about five minutes, was encountered. The captain picked up some of the stones after the storm was over, and the actual measurement found them to be four and three-quarter inches in length. All hands had to seek shelter in the cabin and under the boats. The bark was forty-two days rounding Cape Horn, and was hove to nine days of the time. Thence to the equator she had fine weather.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

☞ It is now considered proper to speak of a dentist as an Odontologist.

☞ A man in Saco was recently buried in the same clothes in which he had been twice married.

☞ One of the garrison of St. Helena during the imprisonment of Bonaparte, is living near Arcadia, Ill.

☞ A Bay City (Mich.) paper announces the discovery that a half-breed Indian girl in that city, is heiress to a $1,000 000 estate in Pittsburg.

☞ In Providence, R. I., recently a runaway horse caused the upsetting of a hearse. The coffin was broken open by the fall, and the corpse rolled into the gutter.

☞ An Iowa doctor thinks tight lacing is a public benefit, because it kills off the foolish girls and leaves the wise ones to grow into women.

☞ A cruel young man in Kentucky rode his horse thirty miles in two hours for a wager of $250.

☞ "You needn't come on Saturday night, or any other night," was the soothing remark, written in delicate female characters on a postal card which winged its way through the Leavenworth post-office the other day.

☞ A bear caught in a trap at Eden, Vt., one day last week, chewed off his imprisoned leg and walked away on the other three, thus setting humanity an example how to bear an amputation.

☞ A woman in West Chester, Pa., recently testified that during her professional career of nineteen years she had laid out 3000 dead bodies.

☞ The King of Portugal has presented his wife, the Queen, with a gold medal, for the heroic conduct lately displayed by her in saving their two children from drowning.

☞ A tree was recently felled in Indiana, the hollow trunk of which was found to be filled for a space of three feet with honeycomb.

☞ A Boston merchant, who recently became insane, barricaded himself in his store after putting out a placard stating that he was within, armed with a revolver, and ready to defend his castle. He filled small orders through the opening of the door, but would not allow even his partner to enter.

☞ Scene in a London Restaurant.—Old Gent—"You don't mean to tell me, waiter, that you can't give me a toothpick." Waiter—"Well, sir, we used to keep 'em, but the gents almost invariably took 'em away when they'd done with 'em."

☞ Two little boys at St. Cloud, Minn., lately amused themselves by filling a schoolmate's mouth with snow and tying a handkerchief round his jaws to keep them shut. The jury returned a verdict of "playful homicide."

☞ A professor, in explaining to a class of young ladies the theory according to which the body is entirely renewed every 7 years, said: "Thus, Miss B., in 7 years you will in reality be no longer Miss B." "I really hope I shan't," demurely responded the girl, casting down her eyes.

☞ Recently the second officer of one of the Cunarders distinguished himself by jumping overboard to save the life of a sailor who fell from the mast while at work. The steamer was in mid-ocean, going thirteen knots, and there was a high sea.

☞ Referring to the many horrible displays of the execution of criminals, caused by the ignorant bungling of the executioner, the New York World thinks that it would be useful to establish a national school for hangmen, where they might properly learn their profession.

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PHILADELPHIA, SATURDAY, DEC. 13, 1873.

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SATURDAY EVENING POST,

No. 319 Walnut Street, Philadelphia.

1874.

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SATURDAY EVENING POST,

No. 319 Walnut Street, Philadelphia.

LETTERS FROM ZIG.

A MAN'S WAY.

Mr. Rogopoco is a Man.

He is one of the best of men, as men go. (That isn't saying that men don't go as far as anybody, mind you.) Mr. Rogopoco was a catch, when he was young. He was and is real nice, I assure you. He was a good dancer, had a beautiful long mustache, was tall and graceful, modest and good-tempered, and had an affectionate disposition and a good moral character. He wasn't addicted to any of those wretched, disgraceful vices which, the world over, are the ear-marks of fast young men. The young ladies liked him and set their caps at him. Those nice girls who follow husband-catching as a trade, had their eyes on him. He was a shining mark for those damsels who by their actions seem to say:

"I dinna care what I should want,
If I could get but a man."

At last a young lady married Mr. Rogopoco, sure enough. He yielded gracefully and gallantly, as he did everything else. And once married, he was one of the best of married men—as married men go. (And again, that isn't saying that married men don't go as far as other men, mind you. Not at all.) He was always as polite to Mrs. R. as he had been in courting time; and there isn't one man in five thousand of whom you can say as much. He never called her my dear before folks and swore at her behind folks. He never said she shouldn't wear a bustle. Doubtless she'd have worn it all the same, if he had said she shouldn't wear it. But he never said it. And when a man doesn't grumble when his wife puts on her first new-fashioned bustle, you may take it as an infallible mark that he is one of the best of husbands. Was Mrs. Rogopoco happy? Yes, verily, and envied by all the other disappointed husband-trappers. The "fishers of men" thereabouts wished themselves in her place, and wondered what Rogopoco could see in that creature to want to marry her. Mrs. Rogopoco was happy, but she wasn't as happy as she had expected to be. She had expected her life to be a pathway of roses, and so it was, only Mrs. Rogopoco had made no allowance for the thorns which grow on every rose-bush.

Rogopoco has his faults.

They are noble masculine faults, to be sure. They are faults which would be the earthly ruination of any woman. But a man! In a man they are but noble masculine weaknesses.

Mr. Rogopoco raises his manly form from his couch about seven in the morning in winter, and six in summer. He puts on clean stockings, and thrusts the soiled ones into his slippers, and thrusts his slippers under the edge of the bed. He puts on clean linen, and leaves the cast-off linen in a corner. His soiled handkerchief he doesn't change at all, but leaves it in whatever pocket Providence pleases. After breakfast, when he goes down to his store, he hauls it out, in all its blackness, in the presence of the ladies who are shopping. They see it and are disgusted. They go away and tell folks what a slovenly wife Rogopoco has. Bless the man! I believe he'd carry one handkerchief six weeks, and never know the difference, if his wife didn't watch him like an 'awk or a howl, and keep everlastingly nagging him. That's one of the thorns on her rose-bush. Once Rogopoco lost all his handkerchiefs, nearly. He couldn't tell what went with his handkerchiefs, he said. He'd get a clean one every little while, and it would disappear in less than no time, and he could tell no more than the man in the moon where it went. Mr. Rogopoco was of the opinion that some evil-disposed person was robbing him of all his handkerchiefs one at a time. One day Mrs. R. noticed that Rogopoco's overcoat looked particularly baggy and bunchy about the skirt, as if Rogopoco had been stealing half a bushel of meal, for instance, and concealing it within the lining of his overcoat. Or maybe he might be getting love-letters from some other woman, and hiding them thus from the eye of his ever-faithful wife. Full of a dread of she knew not what, Mrs. R. poked her inquisitive fingers far down into the depths of Rogopoco's pocket. Her hand went deeper than the pocket, down, down into the fathomless unknown of Rogopoco's coat-lining. Mrs. Rogopoco drew out a pocket-handkerchief. Down she plunged into the fathomless unknown again, and with a sigh of relief, clawed out two more handkerchiefs. Down she went again and again, until a pile of ten pocket-handkerchiefs rewarded her industrious search. A hole had come unbeknownst into Rogopoco's overcoat pocket, and the handkerchiefs had slipped down through, one by one; and that unconscious man went about day after day, in profound ignorance of it. Fancy a woman's being such a blind goose as that!

On wash-day, unless she has done it sooner, Mrs. R. goes around the house to hunt up her husband's handkerchiefs, one after another, a soiled handkerchief in every pocket. It takes considerable time, but that's nothing of course. Unless Mrs. R. happens to remember particularly about fishing the soiled hose out of Rogopoco's various pairs of slippers, boots and shoes, they are left to repose unwashed, and her martyr of a husband by and by comes and complains to his wife that he hasn't any clean stockings, not a single pair, the poor soul! Mrs. Rogopoco leaves her work, goes off on another search, and shortly brings up with half a dozen pairs of pitiful-looking stockings in her hands. I don't know what are the thoughts of Mrs. R., about this time; but I know she says to herself sometimes:

"Drat the men! I don't see what they are made for."

It's particularly soothing to Mrs. Rogopoco's feelings, after the week's washing and ironing are all done, and it is the very last of the week, to find two-thirds of Rogopoco's wardrobe yet lying about loose, here and there, in holes and corners, just where Rogopoco left them when he flung them off. It's especially pleasant when it's Saturday afternoon, and Rogopoco hasn't a clean change for Sunday. Sometimes Rogopoco leaves his soiled hose lying on the parlor floor. If he has a pair of disreputable old slippers, down at the heel and out at the toes, and all that, they are sure to be in the parlor along with the dirty stockings. It's nice to have the minister and Mrs. Snob call and find them there. Oh! yes. Of course it's all Mrs. R.'s fault. Of course she ought to follow meekly around like a small dog at Rogopoco's heels, and gather up his soiled clothes and put them in the clothes-bag. Well; she does it generally. But she doesn't do it meekly. It isn't in a woman's flesh and blood to be meek about the like of that.

Rogopoco washes himself frequently. He prides himself on being a clean man. And every blessed time he performs his ablutions, he leaves the soap lying on the stand-cover instead of in the soap-dish, and the soiled water in the basin, and the towel lying on a chair, and every time his wife has to come and clean the whole mess up after him. Mr. Rogopoco kindly tacks up some brackets and hanging-basket hooks for Mrs. R. He leaves the rocking-chair upside down in the middle of the parlor, and the chisel and hammer lying on the piano. Just then he remembers that he has forgotten to change his collar. Rogopoco wears paper collars. He rushes to his collar-box in great haste, changes his collar, and leaves his greasy old paper collar stretched up, large as life, beautifully decorating the parlor mantelpiece. And here let me remark on my own hook, exclusively, that I don't know what possesses the men. Why in nature they will always string out a vile old dirty paper collar on the mantelpiece, or sitting-room table, or hang it up on the nail over the looking-glass, instead of burning it up, is past my comprehension.

An old dirty paper collar is the meanest-looking object in civilization.

I'm so impressed with the truth of that fact that I put it in a paragraph all by itself. And I really would like to know what is the psychological interpretation of the fact that no masculine creature ever will burn up his old cast-off paper collars. Is there something in the essence of them which touches a man's soul with tenderness—something which makes him forever like to have the old things around? I pause for an answer.

Mr. Rogopoco has curly brown whiskers. He brushes his whiskers nicely, ten or a dozen times a day. He leaves the brush full of nice brown whiskers. Mrs. R. has to clean the whiskers out of the brush every time. In fact, the history of much of her life may be written in these words: Trot, trot, trot around after her husband and clean up messes after him. No amount of earthly nagging will ever get it into his head that he ought to do any differently. His case is hopeless. Women don't know what they are marrying till it is too late, and they've got their necks fast in the goose-yoke.

Now, Mrs. Rogopoco wants to know, and I want to know, why Mr. Rogopoco oughtn't to do all these things for himself? Isn't his wife's time just as valuable as his? Wouldn't it be just as easy for him to put his soiled handkerchiefs and stockings away as it is for his wife to trot around after him and do it? In short, why in the name of the holy crocodile can't men be decent, as well as women? That's what I want to know. I tell you if I had a son, and he left the wash-basin two-thirds full of greasy black water where he had been washing himself, I'd make him get up in the middle of the night to empty it, but I'd make him remember it. People owe it to civilization to make decent, orderly and clean human beings out of their sons just as well as their daughters. You needn't tell me it's man's way to be slovenly and careless, and to make messes about a house. A man has no business to have such ways anymore than a woman has. A man has just as much right to hang up his coat and put away his hat as a woman has to hang up her shawl and put away her bonnet. And a woman has no more business to go around after a man and pick up his dirty stockings for him, than he has to pick up a woman's dirty stockings. A great hulk of a man has no right to expect himself to be waited on like a baby three months old, either by his wife, mother or sister. It's not unmanly to be decent. A man may be as great as George Washington, and still pick up his dirty stockings. So don't talk to me, if you please; because I know what I know. Moreover, my dear young lady friends, look sharp before you marry a man whom you will have to trot after till doomsday, hanging up his hat and coat, picking up his dirty linen off the parlor floor, cleaning the washstand after him, and putting away his boots and slippers. Above all things:

Don't marry a young man unless he burns up all his dirty paper collars.

ZIG.

LETTER FROM NEW YORK.

DEAR POST:—The first snow of the season fell this morning. I don't know that it *fell* either, but I saw some stray particles of what I took to be snow floating about in a lost sort of a way, all mixed in with dead leaves and dust. I thought it the advance guard of a fine ron of sleighing, but the sun came out from behind a cloud and laughed the idea to scorn. I mention all this because it has been my settled intention to write about Furs this week, and I thought it was likely to be a seasonable subject; but with all this beauty and brightness, with no touch of frost in the air, I am half inclined to let the topic go over to another week. I would do so, only I know there isn't a ghost of a chance of this communication reaching the eager public for two or three weeks yet, and by that time it will be December, and cold enough for almost anything. So I think I may as well stick to my original idea, and talk about furs.

Now, after such an elaborate preface, one would naturally think there must be a great deal to tell, but there isn't. I presume, if I was a mind to condense, I could give all the information I possess on the subject in about six lines. But where any one is situated just as fashion-writers are, they don't want to condense. They want to make just as much of everything as they can. Perhaps it is not generally known, but it is a fact, that the secret of entertaining conversation, also, is in making everything go just as far as it will. I know ladies who can talk to you all day, and interest you in spite of yourself in matters that are of not the slightest interest to you, (a flat contradiction, but true nevertheless,) and which you would insist you did not care a straw about any way. They do it by particularizing, and making an entertaining story out of what others would dispose of in five words, and you never would recollect they had said anything. I *like* people who can say something when they open their mouths. I met such an one yesterday, and she was the one of all others I ought to have met, for my usually gay spirits were somewhat clouded, and had it not been against my principles I should have indulged in a severe attack of the blues. I don't know what had gone wrong exactly, but something with the housekeeping I believe—the bread wouldn't rise, and the baby was cross, and the dressmaker hadn't got the armholes big enough in my new wrapper, and I couldn't get the right set to my hair, and altogether a dozen little things, trifling enough, but very annoying, had served to disturb me. 'Twas then I met this lady, and in trying to be polite I inquired why her sister wore a widow's cap. Most any one would have told me that it was because she had lost her husband; but this one didn't. She asked me if I hadn't heard of poor Fred's death, and what a singular case it was? And then she went right along and told me every particular connected with his sickness, his last words, and at what hours telegrams were sent to each member of the family, when and how they arrived, and what each one said, and how his wife behaved under the affliction, where his daughter stood, and how she looked, and what she wore, and what she said when he drew his last breath, and where the different sons were located, and how Willie cried and held his father's hand, and Frankie looked on with composure. How many days they kept the body, then all about the funeral, who preached the funeral sermon, and what the text was, and who was there, and where he was buried, and how long it took them to go, and how long to come back, and a thousand other things equally pleasant to hear. Now, had I spoken of a birth in the family, or a marriage, or anything else, she would have told me all about it in that same pleasant, romancing style, and it would have been better than half the stories one reads in books; and when I hear one "going on" that way and interesting a whole room full, I wonder why everybody couldn't have been made the same way. It is only now and then we meet a woman that can be interesting on *all* subjects, and it is *rather* seldom we meet one that can be interesting on *any*: but that is because we are all going the same way, I suppose.

But to "return to our mutton." I expect I was in a dozen fur-stores yesterday. Nothing very remarkable in *that*, but when one comes to talk about the reduction in the *price* of furs, somebody is destined to be astonished. Last year a handsome ermine set would cost $50. This season a handsomer one can be purchased for $20. Alaska sables, that have been retailing years back for $45, can now be had for $14. The reduction in Hudson Bay sable, mink and chinchilla is not so marked, though they are not held at as high figures as last year. Silver fox is the fashionable fur at present and commands the highest price. It is seen in muffs and boas, and is much used in trimming velvet cloaks and polonaises. Astrachan cloaks are not in market. The fashion has completely died out. I for one am glad of it, I never admired Newfoundland dogs much, and per consequence did not admire Astrachan cloaks. Seal-skin sets do not show much reduction in price: in the fur-stores you see nothing lower than $100, and from that you can go up as long as your money holds out. In the dry-goods houses seal-skin sets can be purchased at a much lower figure, but they are inferior to anything kept in first-class fur establishments.

In fashion, seal-skin sacques divide honors with velvet. They are considered equally elegant, and the choice is a matter of taste entirely. It is perhaps a little more economical to buy a velvet cloak at the same price you would pay for a seal-skin. In seal-skin you get a plain sacque, that is all there is of it, and all that can be made of it. In velvet, it is quite different, at least, it was in a case I witnessed the other day, in which a calculating little piece of femininity, plain in her tastes, *would* insist in buying a velvet cloak loaded down with trimmings. The cloak in itself was pretty, but the heavy pleatings of velvet tacked on here and there, and the numberless yards of thread lace, it was decided by the popular vote, spoiled the whole thing, and made it look fussy. But the cloak was bought nevertheless, and then the secret was out. All those pleatings and fillagrees and gimcracks had to come off, leaving a plainly-trimmed elegant cloak, and out of the superfluous rubbish, she had velvet and lace enough to make pockets, and cuffs and collar to a new silk redingote, besides making the "dearest love of a hat" that has been seen this season. However, I would not advise any one who stands in need of a hat, or wants a redingote trimmed, to go and buy a velvet cloak to do it with, unless they want the cloak, too.

And now, having made those two trifling allusions to hats, it is just as much as I can do to keep from writing a whole column about them, it is such a fascinating subject. I don't suppose there is anything in this world a woman thinks so much about as she does about her bonnets and hats—unless maybe it might be her husband and baby. But I see I have taken up about as much space as is allowed me, and for fear of encroaching upon some other person's territory, I will only say that no one under sixty years of age wears strings to her bonnet. An elastic, passing under that inevitable braid at the back of the head, is all that is required. And the only way to tell them from round hats, is by the height—which they are a good deal *lower*. Some say they place the bonnets a little farther back on the head, too, but I have taken half a dozen measurements, and I can't discover any difference.

OLIVE KING.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

POEMS BY W. D. HOWELLS. Published by J. R. Osgood & Co., Boston.

It is our custom to treat with great leniency such firstlings of the Muse as the little volume before us—to be

"To their faults a little blind,
And to their virtues very kind."

It is enough punishment and mortification, for a novice in book-making to fail without having added to it the sting inflicted by a brutal if sharp-sighted reviewer.

But in the present case, we hold ourselves at liberty to pursue a different policy. Mr. Howells is understood to be the editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, a periodical which, in our experience, never does a generous thing when it can do a mean one; and so we feel ourselves justified in meting out to Mr. Howells that kind of criticism which the *Atlantic* so often metes out to others.

Not that we design treating Mr. Howells' "poems" at all unfairly—we shall give them simple justice. That they do not deserve praise is not our fault, but his misfortune. We need only glance at a few of his verses to manifest what quality the writer is of. For instance he describes such a simple thing as a shawl lying on the floor in the following high-flown language:

"The *fantasy* of the crimson shawl's *chiaroscuro*,
Lying *without a stir*
Upon the floor."

Why should it not lie without stirring, or without "a stir," as the poet elegantly expresses it? Shawls are apt to lie that way. Here is a conundrum:

"Without, and going from the room, and never
Departing, *did depart*
Her steps."

This is, as we suppose, a poetical conundrum—but it is not worth guessing. It does not mean anything.

Wordsworth says "the child is father of the man." Our poet seems, as a child, to have had an inordinate love of sweet things, for he says—

"I haven't eaten
A mulberry since the ignorant joy
Of anything sweet in the mouth could sweeten
All this bitter world for a boy."

It is a poor kind of boy that is so fond of mulberries and other sweet things as all that, and we cannot wonder at his developing into a poor sort of poet. Those little gluttons never amount to much. By the way, in this one short poem about mulberries, *leaves* is rhymed with *glees*, *fold* with *killed*, *clown* with *blown*, *it is* with *victories*, *defeat* with *feet* (!), and *again* with both *stain* and *men*.

We have not room to record all the errors of taste, and the lines devoid of rhythm—such as

"Ah! little coquette! Fair deceit!"

where "coquette" has to be pronounced with the accent on the first syllable to make the line harmonious—and barely space to allude to the calling of the bland October wind "shrewd;" and to the following lame and impotent conclusion to a poem in some respects good:—

"Loudly then laughed the father,
And shouted again for cheer,
And called to the drowsy housemaid
To fetch him a pipe and beer."

Mr. Howells, in a good many of the poems, scarcely seems to know what he designs saying. They read as if he had sat down with an intention to write something very fine, but with no particular idea in his head. Of course the result is a general mistiness and feebleness, which does not conduce to the reader's delight. In other cases, where he has something to say, he takes that unhappy step from the poetical to the ridiculous, of which we have so often heard. For instance, he pictures a young man going to see his beloved, he is outside, and she inside "on the stair"—and yet the poet says:—

"They can *hear* each other's heart-beats,
But a wooden door is between."

Now, considering that the distance between those young people must have been at least from ten to twenty feet, and "a wooden door" (thickness not given, but probably, it being an outside door, from one to two inches,) also between them, we respectfully submit to Mr. Howells that it would be impossible for them to "*hear* each other's heart-beats." We would suggest that a simple alteration of the word *can* to *could* in the first line, with the addition of the words *twenty feet* in the second, would make it all right. Then the lines would read—

They could hear each other's heart-beats,
Only a wooden door and some twenty feet are between.

To be sure the last line would be rather long—but a poet like Mr. Howells, need never stop for such a little trifle as that.

We have occupied too much space already, and yet we cannot forbear quoting entire the very remarkable and truly suggestive poem with which Mr. Howells concludes his volume—as if he wanted to leave a distinct impression on the minds of his readers. He calls it—

THE POET'S FRIENDS.

"The robin sings in the elms;
The *cattle* stand beneath,
Sedate and grave, with great brown eyes
And fragrant meadow breath.

"They listen to the *flattered* bird,
The wise-looking, stupid things;
And they *never understand a word*
Of all the poet sings."

This certainly is very complimentary to the poet's "friends"—the "wise-looking, stupid things"—but we have little doubt that it is richly deserved. Only those who "never understand a word of all the poet sings" could be expected to "flatter" him. Still it rather seems to us that the poet himself should be the last one to speak about it. It is all a matter of taste, however, and there is so much bad taste displayed in this volume, that a degree more or less is of very little consequence.

"Call you this poetry?"
Mad Apollo growls;
"Better have named it truly,
'Howls by Howells.'"

H. P.

OBSERVATIONS.

BY MAX ADELER.

—We learn from a recent writer that "some of the South Pacific islanders do their mourning after a peculiar fashion. A widow will lay aside her bonnet and wear the hat of her late husband; sometimes a widower will go about in a loose gown of his departed wife worn over his own proper dress." A moment's reflection will show that we have great cause for thankfulness that this custom does not prevail here. If it did, how horrible would be the situation of a fat and tall widow, condemned by the inexorable law of custom to wear the trousers of her late lamented short and thin husband! Imagine too the feelings of a small and lean widow who had to wear the coat and trousers of a departed husband who was high and corpulent! Worse yet, consider the dreadful suffering of a young and lovely girl who should be obliged to wear the antique bonnet of a deceased aunt, or if the mother should have to go to church dressed in the short frock and lace cap of a babe that had been called away. Think of the misery of the small boy who would have to shuffle along to Sunday-school in the gigantic boots of his departed father, and with that parent's high hat covering his head until it rested on his very shoulders. And still more awful, imagine a lone widow with a full set of natural teeth of her own, being compelled to sport an extra set of false teeth that belonged to her former partner! No, we protest against the introduction of this practice. If we must display our grief let us do it in a less grotesque form.

—One of the daily papers informs us that "even the undertakers complain of the effects of the financial crisis." This, it must be admitted, is really dreadful. It is bad enough for some of us who want to live, to do without the comforts of life, but how dreadful it must be for a man who wants to die and who is all ready, but who is so poor that he has to sit waiting for a fall in the price of coffins! Many of these unfortunates doubtless will regret that they did not let their vital sparks flee last year when things were easier and money more plenty. And this, it seems to us, teaches a most impressive lesson upon the folly and wickedness of delay. But now there is nothing to do but to wait until the times are better, unless, indeed, a few of those disappointed people can get the undertakers to arrange matters for them at club rates. Partnership funerals would relieve the situation and make a rather surprising novelty.

—Thomas Brown was employed at the Blank St. Theatre in this city a few years ago as a kind of utility man, and one night the manager put him behind the scene at the rear of the stage to take care of the moon. Brown had a candle on the end of a long pole, and it was his duty to hold the light behind the moon, which was merely a round, unpainted space in the curtain, and to pull the curtain slowly up to represent the rising of the moon. Brown seated himself on a piece of a baronial castle, and while waiting for the order to go to work, he fell asleep. Presently the tragedian on the stage said to the heroine, "Swear by yon bright moon, &c., &c.," and turned to point to it, but the orb of night was not there. The stage manager flew around and gave Brown a kick, and in a frenzy ordered him to "h'ist that moon quick!" Brown was bewildered and without waiting for further orders he ran the curtain clear up with one jerk, when the cord broke and down it came again. Another string was hurriedly rigged on the pulley and the moon began to rise properly, but Brown's nerves were so unstrung by fright that he couldn't hold the candle steadily behind it, so that there were fifteen or twenty eclipses during the ascent, the light meanwhile wandering all over the curtain to the infinite amusement of the audience. However, the luminary got safely up at last, and the tragedian again observed, "Swear by yon bright moon," but before the words were fairly out, the cord again snapped, the curtain unrolled with velocity and broke loose from the roller, revealing Brown, the lunar elevator, roaming around in his shirt sleeves with a candle on a stick. A moment later the manager was fumbling among his hair, and that very night Mr. Brown closed his theatrical career. The manager remarked to a confidential friend that while a man who was capable of making the same moon rise three times in one night and of getting up any number of eclipses and other astronomical phenomena might be valuable for some purposes, he was about as fit for a theatre as a wall-eyed mule was for singing hymns.

—Our young friend Parker went around the other evening to visit the two Miss Smiths. After conversing with them for awhile, Miss Susan excused herself for a few moments and went up-stairs. Presently Parker thought he heard her coming, and slipping behind the door he suggested that the other Miss Smith should tell Miss Susan that he had gone. But it wasn't Susan; it was old Mr. Smith in his slippers. As he entered he looked around and said to his daughter—

"Ah, ha! So Parker's gone, has he? Good riddance, I was just comin' down to keep my eye on him. I hope he hasn't been proposin' to you, Mary Jane. I don't want any such lantern-jawed, red-headed idiot as that foolin' round here. He hasn't got the sense of a rutabaga turnip or money enough to buy a clean shirt. He gets none of my daughters. I'll shake the everlastin' life out of him if I catch him here agin, mind me."

Just as he concluded, Susan came down, and not perceiving Parker, she said—

"Thank goodness he's gone. That man is enough to provoke a saint. I was awfully afraid he was going to stay and spend the evening. Mary Jane, I hope you didn't ask him to come again?"

Then Parker didn't know whether to stay there or to bolt, while Mary Jane looked as if she would like to drop into the cellar. But Parker finally walked out, rushed to the entry, seized his hat, shot down the front steps and went home meditating upon the emptiness of human happiness, and the uncertainty of Smiths. He has not called since, and his life thus far has been unmolested by the head of the Smith family.

—There is only one class of individuals for whom we have a feeling of malignant and deadly hatred. We refer to those persons who embrace every opportunity that is offered to make stale puns. We know men who never refer to a shoemaker without remarking that he is a man of sole, or that he has lost his little awl, or that his work is made to last; who never see a piece of cheese without observing that it is mitier than the sword, and who invariably speak of marriage as "matter o' money." These persons jerk out these puns with all the enthusiasm that might characterize a man who has just perpetrated a good thing, and then when you decline to laugh, because you are well aware that the puns in question were old stagers in the time of Noah—that patriarch indeed having amused his family circle with them in the ark during the days in which it was too wet to go out—the fiends actually think you don't see the point, and they proceed to explain each pun in detail. We are not naturally of a sanguinary disposition. We hesitate generally about shedding the blood of our fellow-creatures. We have even left the battle-field—when we were out with the militia—and gone quietly home rather than steep our hands in human gore; but we have firmly resolved that the next man who in our presence makes a pun on the words "sole," or "awl," or "matrimony," shall die on the spot. We shall carry a howitzer in our pocket for the purpose. Our cry now is Vengeance. We will be tormented no longer.

—Steel bars, we learn from a scientific journal, are to be used hereafter in some localities in place of bells. "They produce a pure, distinct and melodious sound, and are said to be cheaper, lighter, and not so liable to crack as bells." We can think of but one objection to this. It will sound dreadfully in poetry to say "Ring out, wild bars, to the wild sky." Or, "Listen to the merry, merry bars!" "The sleigh-bars sound across the snow." "Toll the bars, his warfare's o'er." "The church-bar tolls the knell of parting day," &c., &c. Equally inconvenient will it be to have to say, "Mary Jane, ring the dinner-bar;" "Mrs. Jones, I think there was a pull at the front door-bar;" "Susan has gone to answer the bar," &c., &c. The use of the word bar in the latter connection might convey to the mind of an unsophisticated visitor that there was a grog-shop in the house. We shall stick to bells for the present, we think. The new arrangement is somewhat too bar-bar-ous!

—A recent newspaper article says:—"There can be no doubt that greenbacks are conductors of contagious diseases, and that persons handling them are extremely liable to take such diseases, especially small-pox." This no doubt is true—and we now have a startling revelation to make. We know that it will not be believed. We are aware that people will say that it is simply incredible, and yet it is a fact that we can lay our hand on a man who is willing to take thousands of greenbacks every day, and stuff them into his pockets, and walk around with death from small-pox staring him in the face as a consequence of his maddened folly. It *is* difficult to believe that such a desperate and reckless person really exists, and yet we know a man who don't care how many of these poisonous greenbacks are secreted in his clothes, and who can have millions buried at him without the quiver of a muscle. Doubters can be convinced by calling at this office with a greenback for the purpose of experimentation. Large denominations are preferred by this extraordinary man.

—When Jones's Menagerie was in Millersburg the last time, the proprietor wouldn't pay his bill for advertising in the *Morning Argus*, and so the editor attached the cage containing the hyena. The sheriff secured the cage and brought it around to the *Argus* office, where it remained for several weeks. The bill amounted to but fifteen dollars—and as the animal ate two dollars worth of beef every day for four weeks, the amount of profit in that particular form of collecting the debt did not seem to be encouragingly large. One afternoon the hyena broke loose and nearly chewed up the foreman, while the editor saved himself only by suddenly climbing out on the roof. The hyena tore around through that sanctum, upsetting type, rolling in printer's ink, and feeding himself with poetry, and advertisements, and wood-cuts, and incendiary editorials on Cuba for four days, during which the publication of the *Argus* was suspended and the editor remained on the roof thinking solemnly about things. Finally the sheriff placed a ladder against the building and undertook to destroy the hyena with a shot gun. He fired eighty seven times before inflicting a mortal wound, and when at last the editorial corps returned, the room looked as if the battle of Waterloo and three or four skirmishes had been fought in it. Probably no hyena was ever buried with more literature in its stomach than that hyena of Jones's had; and an impression did get abroad that it died, not from the wounds received from the sheriff's gun, but from its inability to digest those tough editorials of the *Argus* and the original poetry. They dug the wood-cuts out with a butcher-knife. Menageries which advertise in the *Argus* now have to pay in advance and give the editor's family dead-head tickets for the season.

—A New Jersey paper up the river is in trouble. The editor wrote the other day of a certain official that "his conduct indicates a great want of propriety; and he must think so in his soul." But when the type-setter got hold of the article he misunderstood the sentence, so that it appeared in the paper thus: "His conduct indicates a great want of sobriety; he must be drunk as an owl." Then the official armed himself with a carving-knife and sallied forth in search of scalps. The editor lined his clothing inside with stove-plates, took out a fresh insurance on his life, and threw up breastworks in front of his sanctum door. In the next issue the mistake was explained, and the raging victim abandoned his pursuit of hair and handed the carving-knife to his cook. And thus was averted a frightful tragedy, which would have deluged New Jersey with blood, and added one more to its array of bald-headed journalists.

THE GOOD "THE POST" DOES.—A letter before us says:—

"I can hardly tell you how much the paper you send me is appreciated; first by your correspondent, then by an aged widow, thence it passes to a family *where the wife reads it aloud and keeps her husband from the drum-shop and saloon many an evening*; and in more homes than those mentioned, is this one number of THE POST a welcome visitor."

Our readers will see by the above that there is a kind of good that can be done by a paper like THE POST, which a paper of a less entertaining character could not do.

1874. 1874.

OUR OPENING STORIES

FOR

THE NEW YEAR.

Davy Crockett on the Track;

OR,

The Cave of the Counterfeiters.

BY FRANK CARROLL.

AUTHOR OF "THE HEIR OF GLENDALE," "JOHN FARMORE'S PLOT," ETC.

This captivating story, which has for its hero that far-famed hunter and backwoodsman of Tennessee, Col. Davy Crockett, will be commenced in the Post of Jan. 3, 1874. (No.) It is a first-class romance, and one which we are happy to be able to announce for the opening of the New Year. We shall also begin, a short time afterward, a fascinating novelet of English life entitled

The Ghost of Norman Park.

BY MARY ATHERSTONE BIRD;

to be followed by the thrilling romance of Northern and of Tropical life—

THE SEA OF FIRE;

OR,

ON THE BRINK OF A PRECIPICE.

BY MAURICE F. EGAN.

Also, by a new story from the pen of BURR THORNBURY, whose late work, "JESSIE DALE, *The Conductor's Daughter*," now being published in this paper, has excited much interest by its strange plot and striking incidents. His new serial will be entitled

HARD TIMES;

OR,

THE REAL VICTIMS OF THE PANIC.

A TALE OF THE WINTER OF 1873–74.

It is scarcely necessary to state to those acquainted with THE POST, that the best stories of Love, Adventure, and High and Low Life, in this country and in England, etc., to be found in any weekly paper, will appear in our columns during the coming year. Our Letters, Miscellaneous Articles, etc., also will be of the highest character.

JESSIE DALE,

The Conductor's Daughter;

OR,

The Plot Against the Pennsylvania Railroad.

BY BURR THORNBURY, ESQ.,

AUTHOR OF "ST. LEGER'S LOVE," "RAVENSWOOD," "SEALE, THE SCOUT," "AGNES AYRE," ETC.

CHAPTER XXV.

AS IF FROM THE DEAD.

Two days and two nights Harry Lester lay in the vault after his interview with Belmont Matthewson, before any further effort, beyond that of confinement and meagre diet, was made to break in his spirit.

During this time to his despair the sounds, made as he had been sure by the burglars endeavoring to mine their way into the vault, had not been renewed. Had they abandoned the enterprise, or had *another* vault been the object of their labors? which, it having been reached and robbed, would render the prospect of his deliverance by such unwitting agents hopeless. He conjectured, however, that this latter had not been, for he had not heard any of the demonstrations which would be likely to attend the actual entrance of the robbers and their opening of the safes they might find.

He concluded therefore that they had either been frightened off or had voluntarily abandoned the job as one too difficult or dangerous. And his heart sank as this conclusion forced itself upon his mind.

When two days had been passed in the solitude of his prison, a message was sent him, inquiring if he were ready to attach his signature to documents which would implicate him as a member of the junto.

He returned an indignant refusal, and was informed that patience, if not honesty, was one of the virtues possessed by the conspirators.

This he interpreted to mean that he would be allowed a still longer period for solitary reflection.

He was right.

A week passed, and he was still an occupant of the dismal vault. The dwarf had brought him his daily allowance of Croton and unbuttered bread, but had not given him any of his society. The prisoner of Chillon had not been lonelier than our young friend.

But during the latter days—or nights rather—of this week of solitude, to his exceeding joy, Harry had again heard the burglars at their nefarious labors.

His heart beat high again with hope. He became assured, too, that entrance into the vault he occupied was to be attempted. They were at work under the very foundations. Powder had been used to assist them, and the dull, muffled explosion had jarred the solid walls, sending such a thrill of joy to our hero's heart as the unseen operators could hardly have experienced in their own case even if the blast had been the most effective. Harry's greatest concern was that others might hear what was going on, and his solicitude on this point became almost intolerable.

But still the work progressed without discovery or interruption, and the critical hour was near at hand. Another night would surely witness the final demolition of the partitioning wall.

With what a feverish and trembling impatience Harry waited for the work to be renewed, believing that it was now near a successful end!

Nor was he doomed to disappointment.

He heard again the sound of pick and drill; he felt the iron-lined partition yielding; and at last the entering edges of the implements in use could be touched.

How silent and motionless he was, as he crouched in a corner where no ray of light shining through the apertures already formed, could reveal his presence!

Hard it was to be calm, for such momentous chances hung on the hour that he trembled to think of failure.

It was his only opportunity he believed, and with good reason, for escape, unless he dishonored himself by yielding to the conditions extended him in exchange for his liberation. But he would not think of that. He would die, as he had declared he would, rather than forget his vow. It was pretty hard though, Harry was finding, to even *live* a martyr—to say nothing of dying one—especially since none but his enemies knew anything about it. Oh, if he could only escape, and set the hounds of justice upon the powerful villain who ruled and plotted above his head! What chagrin, what dismay would Belmont Matthewson experience, to learn that the prisoner he thought so safely his, was free to sound the alarm against him—to cry a more open cry than any had yet dared to!

But the delay of even a minute might prove fatal to all this. The sharp-eared dwarf might yet discover what was being done in time to prevent its consummation.

Hole after hole had now been drilled in the heavy plating. The light from a dark-lantern, its one uncovered side turned full upon the work it illuminated, streamed in a fantastic flood, caused by the oddly perforated surface through which it passed, across the narrow vault.

"We're almost in," whispered a voice in trembling satisfaction. "This job has been a tough one, but it is likely to pay."

The fellow was mistaken in his surmises of the presence of gold, bonds or other valuables. The vault they were about entering contained not a dollar. It had been built for a treasure vault, but was now put to other uses.

"Easy, Gaffney, easy with the chisel; don't strike too hard," warned one of the operators, who feared that his comrade's impatience might lead to indiscretion.

"Easy, do you say? and who handles a drill or chisel daintier than I? Do I need to be instructed in this my tenth job of the kind? Fix the glim above there, and produce another: the plate is nearly out."

A few light blows were given, and then Harry saw a hand thrust through and grasp the lower edge of the cut-out piece as if to wrench it loose.

"There!" aspirated the burglar, as if completely successful at last.

"Ha! you thieves! you villains!" cried Harry, springing boldly forward. "You are discovered. At them, men!" as if calling to some companions.

Such a stampede as then there was of those surprised, discomfited and dismayed burglars!

They fled along the tunneled passage, leaving, however, in their frantic haste, the lamp that had been fixed overhead, burning behind them.

Harry crowded himself through the hole in the wall, seized the lantern, and with all the expedition possible followed the retreating villains. He knew they would flee from the premises on which they had commenced their operations, and consequently he had no fear of an encounter with them. The long, narrow, winding tunnel was his way to freedom, and that he trod it joyfully, though not without difficulty, we need not say. He could but even in these anxious moments admire the daring industry that had enabled the burglars to open such a passage.

"And it was all for me!" he chuckled. "I am grateful to you, oh, ye heavy-hearted 'professionals!'"

He arrived at the end of the passage at last, and emerged from it into the rear-room of a rather bare banking-room, which had doubtless been rented by the burglars and used by them merely as a base for their grander operations.

Harry had no trouble in finding his way from it to the street. He had picked up a hat as he went along, deeming the act no larceny, and he was therefore not troubled to reflect that his appearance would attract the attention of any guard, policeman or other individual whom he might meet. He judged, and correctly, that the hour must be near morning, as it was the stillest of the night. The latest goer had gone, and the earliest comer had not come. He stepped quickly toward a street corner, and looking up saw that it was at Broadway and Wall street.

He did not wish to give any alarm—his desire was to get to Philadelphia as soon as possible. Accordingly he moved toward the ferry-house, and crossed by the first boat to the depot, with the object of taking the earliest departing train.

What a blessed sense of freedom was that he experienced as he stood by the guards of the boat, and inhaled the fresh night air that swept down the noble river! Its touch on his pale brow was exhilarating in the extreme, and the buoyancy of his spirits was greater that he had ever before felt.

"Free! free!" soft voices seemed to say, and his soul made silent answer. "Free," he thought, "and this shall be my praise to Heaven for my deliverance—a life devoted to honesty, the defence of right as I shall have opportunity, and hostility unrelenting to that species of evil which now so afflicts our land—rapacious greed!"

A noble vow! and if he trod as closely in the paths of rectitude as his father did, he would keep it. After landing from the boat, procuring his ticket and entering the cars, which soon started, Harry's thoughts became very much employed on the subject of how he should best announce his safety to his friends. They perhaps believed him dead. To appear suddenly among them might produce too great a shock. He was thinking of his mother and of Jessie. Would it be best to telegraph at some station beyond—at Trenton, for instance? The train would probably halt long enough to give him time. He concluded to send a message to his home, but would surprise the Dales in the flesh.

"Joy never kills," thought Harry. "Stowell Dale will see me first, and he will soon prepare my darling for the meeting."

At Trenton he alighted from the train, and sent over the thrilling wires the glad, brief news of his continued existence—if any deemed him dead—and of his coming, safe and sound.

"And now!" he exclaimed to himself, as the rapid wheels again rolled under him, "steam, be even swifter than thy wont, for my spirit is impatient."

But that was a long ride to Harry, despite his efforts to possess his soul in patience. He was coming as if from the dead back to life and love once more. Morning put out the stars before the train reached its destination; but the great glaring day made his situation seem more real. At times he could hardly believe that he was not returning from one of his frequent trips to the metropolis.

He left the cars, feeling now, if his message had gone direct, that he would have to go through the ordeal of being made a hero of. But there was this recompense—the joy of meeting those he loved.

The moment he alighted from the platform of the cars, a welcoming hand found him.

"To yonder carriage," its owner said, hurriedly, not even addressing him by name. "Your mother is there awaiting you."

He hastened to it, his heart pulsing with a mighty joy. The door of the vehicle was open, and he saw his mother's face.

"My son!"

"My mother!"

We will say no more, for joy, like grief, is sometimes sacred.

"She *would* go," said the coachman afterward. "Mr. Lester was not at home; the news set her wild; there was just time to reach the depot: and 'twould have been too bad to have you unmet."

That same swift agent—the telegraph—soon apprized Mr. Lester of his son's return, and brought him flying over the rails to meet him.

In the meantime Harry, tearing himself from the arms of his mother, hastened to the home of Stowell Dale.

Again we drop the curtain on a scene of bewildering joy. The undelayed but cautious announcement of his presence—the incredulous delight of Mr. Dale—the rapturous meeting with Jessie—the brief, wonder-causing explanations—the utter inability for a time on the part of Aunt Mary to comprehend it all—her hot haste, when she *did* recover from the shock, to procure a cup of her life-giving tea—her commiseration of Harry, excited by his pale and drawn countenance, for the strain upon him during the days of his imprisonment had been severe, and showed even through his joy-lighted face—all these we leave the sympathetic reader to imagine.

CHAPTER XXVI.

JESSIE'S PERIL.

Had Beatrice Rowland now been restored to the Dales, the cup of Jessie's happiness at least would have been full. The haunting thought that Jessie might not be his daughter still secretly disturbed Mr. Dale, and at times the longing to know the truth became almost insupportable. The singular resemblance she bore to Mrs. Rowland disturbed him more than anything else. The lady may have been deceived by Belmont Matthewson in the second place as well as in the first. It was not certain, in the conductor's mind, that she was the heiress she was represented to be by the lordly villain. He might be attempting some fresh imposture.

And so, taking all things into consideration, the worthy conductor was in a state of trying unrest, though he said nothing on the subject uppermost in his thoughts. He was only tenderer and more loving if possible toward Jessie, gazing into her eyes sometimes with such an intensity of affection in his expression that she almost wondered at him.

But the time was coming when all would be made clear; but Jessie's life, already shaped, and so happily, by incidents occurring on the rail, was to have something further connected with it in that direction.

Harry thanked his stars a thousand times for the happiness he had found in the society of Jessie—for of course the reader has before this taken it for granted that she was his promised wife—and never entered a railway car without thinking it was in such that he first beheld her face.

It would have been more romantic, he supposed, for them to have met on board some wrecked vessel, or on some wild prairie or desert where he could have rescued her from death, but he was satisfied as it was. He didn't care for romance.

Of course now he was a very frequent visitor at Jessie's home; and the young love budded and growing so near them, was watched with much interest by Conductor Dale and Aunt Mary.

The latter had come at last to realize that Jessie was actually to marry the son of a millionaire, or rather that the son of a millionaire could be such a modest, sensible young man as Harry was—so free from affectation and arrogance, from vanity and supercilliousness.

"Why, he is just like other nice young men, only more so," she declared: and she took such a lively personal interest in him as her prospective nephew, that he began to be very careful to give her no uneasiness on account of his health; for if he was so indiscreet as to give a little cough in her presence, or looked a little flushed or a little pale, out came Aunt Mary's medicine bottle, and he would have hard work to escape a dosing.

But the trials he was thus subjected to afforded him as much amusement as annoyance; and for the sake of Jessie Dale he felt that he could swallow all the herb tea in the universe. Apart from her hobby, he had a very strong liking for Aunt Mary, for he found her a most worthy and lady-like woman.

Cecil Parnell had not continued his calls on Jessie or the conductor. Notwithstanding his promise, he had not been at the house since she had given him to understand that Harry Lester was her favored suitor. During a portion of the time, as we know, he had been occupied in accomplishing his revenge for his disappointment.

After awhile he learned to his astonishment and chagrin of Harry's wonderful escape from the prison to which he had been consigned.

The false Wilmer Dorrance was then mightily vexed indeed.

His hated rival free from the iron clutch of the chief of the junto, and safe in Philadelphia again! It was too much for the young plotter to endure.

He set his wits to work to contrive another scheme of revenge, though such was his despondency over the failure of his first, increased by the knowledge that he had no warm place in Jessie's heart, that he went about the city or secluded himself from observation in an almost suicidal mood. He felt lonely, wretched and discouraged at times; then his hate would blaze up, and he renewed his determination to mar the happiness of Harry Lester if he could not make his own.

And fortune favored him.

A very few days after Harry's escape and return to Philadelphia, Jessie Dale made a brief visit to a young female friend in the neighboring town of S——.

After a pleasant morning and part of the afternoon had been spent, our young heroine went to the depot, where she was to meet Conductor Dale and return with him home.

As Jessie's friend had other visitors, newly arrived, she did not accompany her to the depot, but parted with her at the door, where Jessie took a street-car direct for the train.

She was early at the depot, and instead of waiting in the close passenger-room, as the out-door air was mild she went outside on the platform, to remain until the arrival of the train.

Whom should she meet there but Cecil Parnell!

"Good-afternoon, Miss Jessie. I am delighted to see you," he said.

She returned his greeting pleasantly.

"Are you going to the city?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir," said Jessie.

"And I also. May I have your company that far?"

"If you desire it, Mr. Dorrance."

"Wilmer, if you please. Do you remember our agreement?"

"Which was that you were to call me Jessie, and I was to call you Wilmer?"

"Yes."

"Perhaps it would be best to annul it now."

"Ah!" exclaimed the young man, "I understand, even if you do not intend me to. You can say 'Harry,' but not 'Wilmer.' But never mind. We are good friends still, I trust."

"Certainly," said Jessie.

They walked to the upper end of the platform.

"Look at that huge locomotive," said Cecil, pointing to one which was firing up. "It is to take us to the city. They change 'horses' here."

"The beautiful monster!" exclaimed Jessie, in admiration of the superb engine. "A locomotive always seemed to me like a living, conscious creature, with a soul and an intelligence."

"What a fancy! yet a natural one. Yes, those great, fierce, powerful things do indeed seem to be alive and sentient, and not mere dull machines."

"And I would so like to ride on one!"

"You would!" exclaimed Cecil.

"Oh, it would be glorious!"

"You shall, then, if you desire to."

"I: How can I?"

"Easily enough, if you are in earnest."

"Oh, I am. I have often teased my father to get me the chance, but he never would; he only laughed at me."

"I am acquainted with the engineer," said Cecil. "He is a good-natured, pleasant fellow, and I know he will let you on his engine if I were to ask of him to permit you to ride there."

"Oh, do, do, please," cried Jessie in enthusiasm; "and when I get home I will startle father by telling him what I have been about. It will be so funny."

"Are you really in earnest?" questioned Cecil.

"Yes, yes; please ask the engineer to let me on."

"Have you any baggage?"

"It is checked already. I had nothing but my large cabs, and it was so full and heavy I just had it checked. I have nothing to incommode me."

"Remain here for a moment, Miss Jessie. I will run across and speak to the engineer."

He did so, and came back looking his success.

"Let us go to the other end of the platform. The fresh locomotive is about to be run down there, ready to take the train. We can get aboard the engine at once. See! there it comes.'

The magnificent creature, slowly moving, but with steam up, ready to be turned on in full, went down to take its place.

Cecil Parnell, with such a smile on his face as human features seldom wear, conducted his eager companion to the lower end of the platform.

The engineer, grimy but smiling, left his post to assist Jessie to his engine.

"You want to ride on one of these creeters, do you, miss? Well, it's a nice excitement. But you must promise not to want to get off after we start. We can't stop."

"I promise you that," said Jessie, gayly, "and thank you, in advance, for your kindness. Do we start pretty soon?"

Jessie was all impatience.

"Ten minutes yet, miss," replied the engineer, looking at his watch.

"What a while to wait!" she exclaimed.

The man smiled.

Cecil had been saying something in an undertone to the fireman, and that individual left the engine hurriedly, as if to attend to some momentary matter.

Cecil then mounted the engine, but as he entered the "caboose," halted and called the engineer's attention, as if a discovery had been made.

"Look here, Tom: is that right?"

"What?"

Tom was looking where Cecil's finger pointed. Even as he did so, the young man suddenly gave him a violent push that sent him headlong out upon the side track.

Then springing to the starting-bar, the young villain seized it and turned on the steam. The locomotive moved off, and before the astonished engineer could regain his senses, it was rods in advance of him.

Jessie Dale had been too intently looking ahead to notice the first act of Parnell, but when she heard the fall of the engineer upon the side-track, she turned in alarm, only to catch upon the face of her companion, an expression that horrified her.

He grasped her hand even as he raised the starting-bar. She would have screamed, but her breath seemed gone from her. She stared at him in dumb dismay and terror.

What a face looked into hers! so white, with features so set, with eyes so wild and wicked!

The engine, under a full head of steam, was moving with increasing swiftness. The cries, confusion and astonishment of those who had witnessed this mad movement of the false Wilmer Dorrance were nothing to him.

"Do you think you will enjoy your ride?" he asked of Jessie, with an almost maniacal look.

"Oh, what have you done? What are you doing?" she gasped with a momentary power of utterance.

"You would not be mine on earth, Jessie Dale; but you may be in the spirit-land. Our lives could not be united, but in death we shall not be divided."

"And—and do you intend—"

She could articulate no more; her words withered on her ashen lips.

"It is cruel, Jessie, it is cruel to serve you thus," said Cecil, almost pityingly; "but it will not be long ere we are past all earthly pain. Do you observe that we have been switched to the right-hand track? It was done as we left the single track of the bridge; the express was to have passed before we crossed. It is coming now, and *we are to meet it*. Do you suppose that I could live without you, Jessie? that I could endure to see you the wife of another? No, no; death would be better than that. In five brief minutes we will be in eternity. As we sweep around the curve ahead, the express will meet us. Oh, it will be glorious to die with you, Jessie!"

The poor girl did not swoon as she heard this revelation of his demoniacal design—her terror seemed rather to leave her, and an awful, indignant sense of his daring wickedness took its place. The color came back to her death-white face, and her lately cowering figure grew erect with scorn.

"You are a selfish, villainous coward!" she cried. Then came a burst of tears. Her rising strength fell back to weakness once more. "Oh, father! Harry! aunty!" she wailed: "I shall never see you again."

"Two minutes of the five have gone," said Cecil Parnell. "Give me your hand, Jessie."

She drew it away as from the touch of a serpent.

"Look at me, Jessie," he said, abruptly. "Do you know where we first met?"

Something in his tone caught her attention. Even in that awful moment she looked closely at him.

"Where is your friend, Mrs. Rowland?" he asked, with a strange smile.

"Oh, you villain! do *you* know?"

"I *am* a villain, Jessie. I must confess before I die—before *we* die. *I* stole her from your father's house; *I* was your faithless servant."

"Ah!" cried Jessie, with a gleam of comprehension in her frightened eyes. "The mystery is solved now. You were among us in disguise. And must I die with you, you wretch?"

"One minute yet of life is left us. Yonder is the curve. Around it will soon come the rushing train. Oh, how gloriously this iron monster moves. What a crash there will be!"

He paused, and looked wildly ahead. The shrieking whistle of a locomotive sounded not far away. An expression of horror passed over his face, as if he was but just conscious of the fearful thing he had done.

Again the whistle sounded—this time a little louder.

He staggered to the side of the engine, and leaned out to look.

"The train is coming!" he said, in a hoarse whisper.

He was looking, with a devilish joy in his face, to catch the first glimpse of the approaching train.

(*To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 12.*)

OF ONE DEAD.

BY PAULINE PILKINGTON PILER.

He had eyes blue as hyacinths,
And clear as cool Siloam's waters,
His voice was sweet as sylvan song
Of mother ocean's syren daughters;
The beauty of his childish face
Shone fair and tender in his home,
With lips like coral, and with cheeks
Like damask roses dipped in foam.

His arched feet first learned to tread
The pathways of the homestead-place,
Where yellow lilies blew for him,
And honeysuckles brushed his face;
Here is the little slipper worn
By dainty feet, by tender feet,
That now in shining sandals tread
The pavements of the golden street.

His dimpled fingers learned to grasp
The outreached hand, the given toy,
Or clung together in delight
E'en as they clasped an unseen joy.
There are no little hands to-day
All quivering with passionate bliss;
No little dimpled, rosy hands,
No little hands for me to kiss.

He used to laugh upon my breast,
And croon with me his lullaby,
His peachen temples flushed and warm,
His blue eyes smiling happily;
And now he smiles to other songs,
And sings to angel harmonies,
Striking the strings of heavenly lyres
In soft, celestial symphonies.

He might have been a man on earth,
All massive-built, with thoughtful face,
His clear eye clouded oft in pain,
His patient lips composed in grace;
His smooth cheek bearded, travel-tanned,
His little hands grown wondrous strong,
His heart grown sober 'neath its weight
Of passion conquered, conquered wrong.

Better an angel than a man;
So sweet, so sweet the thought to me
That he stands at the portals white
Of yonder vast eternity,
All crowned and with folded wings,
With face of smiles, with outreached hands,
Waiting, waiting to welcome me
With wondrous love to better lands.

CLAUDIA'S TRIUMPH.

BY CLEMENTINE MONTAGU,

AUTHOR OF "THE COST OF CONQUEST," ETC.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE LOCKED CHAMBER.

Tell her the charm!
So, if she had it, would she rail on me
To snare the next, and if she have it not,
So will she rail. —*Tennyson.*

The same night that saw Austin Bertram stricken down by fever, and tossing his head restlessly from side to side on the pillow in a vain attempt to collect his senses and struggle against the sickness which had seized him at a moment when, more than ever, he required the whole strength of his mind, Frank Vavasour sat in his lonely lodgings musing in a bitter fashion over the events which had so recently happened to him, half wishing that he had foregone his own scruples and the entreaties of Alma, and allowed himself to be made a target for her husband's pistol.

Exploded as dueling is in the present day, there are circumstances which seemed to him to render an appeal to arms almost necessary, and our hero felt that he had lost caste by refusing the satisfaction sought of him. When a man is dissatisfied with himself, he is apt to be unjust to others, and Frank was no exception to the rule. He doubted everything and everybody, even to Claudia Wynne's truth and honesty.

Poor Claudia, she was doomed to be misjudged. That very evening she was present at a gay *reunion* given by Lord Nortonshall at his town house. Amongst the visitors was Lord Wedderburn, who was not a little surprised to see the turn affairs were taking, and watched the actress very closely, sometimes inclined to set her down as no better than many of the butterfly creatures of her profession, and then again feeling inwardly convinced that she must have some powerful motive for being where she was, knowing the whispers that were about concerning her intimacy with the master of the house.

"It's very odd," mused the peer, as he watched her moving listlessly about the brilliantly-lighted rooms. "What can it all mean? I'd almost stake my life upon her nobility—and yet she consents to come here, giving people a handle to talk about her."

Claudia passed close to him as he spoke, but she did not observe him, and he saw that her eyes were gazing far before her in a dreamy sort of way.

"That girl's not happy," he continued to himself. "She used to walk as though she were treading on air, but now her step is heavy and listless. What has become of the bright, happy light that at one time beamed from her eyes? H'm! She joins Nortonshall. Why, I have seen her shrink from the touch of his hand, and turn away from the compliments he was always so ready to administer—and yet here she is, queening it right royally in his house, wearing the jewels he has given her, and receiving his homage as a matter of course. Strange! Nortonshall is not the sort of man to be generous without a return, and yet—I can't understand it, by Jove I can't!"

And Lord Wedderburn dismissed the subject for a time from his mind and joined the party.

It was a very gay and rather noisy assemblage. There were plenty of gentlemen, or rather, fast men about town, who are fond of consorting with such company as their host had gathered together; a number of ladies, but one and all with the indescribable air which stamped them of the class Bohemian—most of these actresses from different theatres, whose bright eyes and handsome figures, rather than their talent, had won for them a somewhat unenviable notoriety, and plenty of fine dresses and trinkets to grace their forms.

And bright gems glittered, soft silk and laces rustled round the table as they do at more select assemblages, where the ladies are all *sans reproche*, though there was not a woman present whom the starched British matron would not have turned aside from with a whisk of the garments, lest they should chance to come in contact with those worn by such creatures.

Yet it was amongst these women that Claudia Wynne, against whom the most censorious had never breathed a syllable, moved about with the sparkling gems which she had worn as Cleopatra still hanging from her tiny ears, and glittering upon the fair, well-moulded neck, from which she longed to tear them with a passionate grasp.

Poor girl! She had retained her good name until now, and it was with a heavy heart that she felt her appearance in these scenes would stamp her with the common brand.

This public acceptance of her titled adorer's homage would at once place her on a level with the girls by whom she was surrounded, whose light laughter and coarse badinage jarred upon her ears, and marked her out by their companionship as their equal. Try as she would, Claudia could not raise her spirits to the level of those around her, nor join in the noisy mirth which circled round the table.

The guests were becoming rather more demonstrative, for it was after supper, and the popping of champagne corks had been continuous during the meal. They had been making a tour of the apartments, and were now congregated in a magnificent drawing-room, glowing with bright colors, and fresh from the upholsterer's hands.

"Oh, my! What a duck of a room!" one of the girls exclaimed.

She was a *petite*, fair-haired creature, who, if report spoke truly, had won the susceptible heart belonging to a young gentleman of good family and fortune but no brains, and whose purse had been dipped into very freely by the pretty *figurante*.

He was walking beside her as she spoke—her little hand resting on his arm, and she glanced around with an envious look.

"Ah!" she continued, "La Claudia may think herself very fortunate."

"What for?" asked her admirer.

"Why, for this place, to be sure."

"Pshaw! She has nothing to do with it."

"No!"

"Certainly not."

"But the house has only just been furnished."

"Ah, but not for her though."

"Who then?"

"Lady Nortonshall."

"His wife? Why I heard they were separated; and she was shut up in some ruined old place of his in Yorkshire."

"All nonsense. I know it was reported so, but, whether or not, she is coming back to town almost immediately."

"What a pity. I suppose we may say good-bye to any fun in this house. And as for La Claudia, she'll have to find a fresh flame, I suppose. Wives don't care much for their husbands' *chers amies*."

"Nortonshall isn't the sort of fellow to pay much attention to his wife's likes or dislikes," said the young man. "He'll do much as he pleases whether or no, I expect."

The object of this conversation was sitting alone in the recess of one of the bay windows, the giver of the *fete* had just left her side, and Lord Wedderburn marked a weary, hopeless expression on Claudia's face that rather puzzled him, and he resolved to find out the cause, if possible, of her *distrait* manner.

"You appear dull, mademoiselle," he said, approaching her. "Are you not well, or only fatigued?"

"Neither, my lord," she answered with a wan smile that had very little of her usual joyousness in it? "I was thinking, that is all."

"Is not a scene of gayety like this sufficient to drive away all thoughts from one's breast, especially unhappy thoughts?"

"I did not say that mine were unhappy, my lord, still I admit they were none of the brightest," replied Claudia.

"Indeed! They should be. Any one of these girls around us would be glad to have gained Nortonshall's preference."

La Claudia flushed with the crimson of anger at these words, and she shot a look at the speaker which made him regret what he had said, but the emotion soon changed, and she buried her face in her hands before answering.

"You misunderstand me, my lord," she said.

And he could see the tears stealing through her fingers as she spoke.

"You mistake me altogether. I know it is my own fault, and I must take the consequences. But I am not the guilty thing you take me for, though you are not alone in your belief, and I must bear the suspicion as best I may."

"There is something in this that I cannot fathom," he said, in a perplexed tone. "I feel assured you do not love that man, and I can hardly believe you are pretending to it for mercenary motives. You have some secret object?"

"Ah!" she answered, "I have indeed—one, if you but knew, would excuse me; but I dare not tell any one. I must trust to myself, though I should be glad of your help."

"Depend upon it in any shape," he answered, warmly.

"Yes, you could help me in one thing."

"And that is—"

"I want to see the house—all the rooms."

"Certainly; but Nortonshall himself would be only too glad to—"

"No, no!" she exclaimed, interrupting him. "I do not wish him to know. You are sufficiently *au fait* with the ways of the house to do this for me."

"Oh, with pleasure. Anything else?"

"Yes. I want to see Brown, his lordship's valet, if possible."

"I daresay I can manage that."

"And one thing more I should wish, my lord. Try to think of me as leniently as you can. I have heard of you as an honorable man, who would not hear a woman's good name blackened in your presence. When, as no doubt you will, you hear mine slandered, remember what I tell you now—that, as I am a living woman, there is no thought of shame in my seeming liking for your friend. I have a purpose in view, as you suspect, but it is a good, a holy one—

it is to shield the innocent, and save the guilty from more crime if possible, even if by so striving I forfeit in appearance my good name and the respect of friends."

He looked at her in some surprise, and no little curiosity, her excited tone and manner being so different from her usual calm gentleness, but he only answered, and in a kindly tone—

"I do believe you, mademoiselle, and will aid you to the extent of my power."

Lord Nortonshall joined them at this moment, and laughingly insisted on knowing what conspiracy they were forming.

"We are simply going to invade the innermost recesses of your house," Lord Wedderburn answered, in the same strain. "Mademoiselle admires your taste so much that she would like to see how it is carried out."

"Oh, certainly. I shall only be too happy to have La Claudia's judgment. The only thing I fear is that some of the rooms may be too cold."

"Oh, we'll brave all that if you will only let us see them," said Claudia. "I have wanted so much to see the rooms prepared for her ladyship, for I have been told—"

"Told what, *ma chère?*" asked the flattered peer, at the same time drawing her arm through his with an assumption of proprietorship which was very disagreeable to her, and added in a low tone, intended for no other ears, "I am so delighted, *ma belle amie*, that you take an interest in my house. Some day, perhaps, you will have a better reason to think of and to love it."

A red flush rose to her cheek, and a scornful answer was on her lip, but she checked it in an instant, and merely replied, in the same low tone:

"Hush, my lord, we are not alone."

He pressed her hand, but she contrived to release it from his grasp, and whispered to Lord Wedderburn to accompany them, for she perceived there was no chance now of going unaccompanied by their host.

Lord Wedderburn took his cue at once, and offering his arm to one of the girls who was standing near, said in a gay manner:

"Come, we are going to make a tour of the house, will you accompany us?"

A shade of annoyance passed over Lord Nortonshall's face. He had seized on Claudia's wish as a good opportunity for a *tête-à tête*, but there was no avoiding making the invitation general, and everybody bustled forward as he said—

"Come, then, ladies and gentlemen all, if you have any fancy for looking over the rooms, only I warn you that they are infernally cold."

But every one laughingly insisted on going with him, and with as good grace as he could muster, Lord Nortonshall, with Claudia on his arm, led the way.

He would infinitely rather have been alone, but as it was all he could do was to keep her entirely to himself, monopolize her attention, and not suffer her to speak to any one but him.

Claudia chatted gayly enough, though there was a forced ring in her voice that more than one noticed; but her admirer took no heed of it. He was delighted with the evident interest she took in the place, and satisfied her curiosity to the full as to where the several doors led to, and what was contained in every cupboard and piece of furniture.

Lord Wedderburn watched her attentively, trying to fathom the reasons for her curiosity.

"I wonder what she is trying to find out?" he asked himself. "What is the secret in this house that she wants to discover?"

But he could not guess. The three were standing alone in what was to be Alma's boudoir, the remainder of the party having gradually left them to return to the drawing-room.

It was a strangely isolated room for a modern English house, looking only into a dismal courtyard, which seemed to be seldom entered. It was situated at the end of a corridor where there were no other doors, and seemed very far away from the rest of the house. A dressing-room, handsomely fitted up, opened from it, but there was no other outlet in this second room, though in the outer one there was another door, partly concealed by hangings.

"Where does this door go to?" asked Claudia.

"I don't think I shall tell you," replied his lordship.

"Oh, but you must! You promised to show me all your house."

"But not the secret places thereof," he retorted. "However, that door opens on a staircase which leads down to the courtyard."

"Very convenient for my lady if she wishes to go out unseen," remarked Lord Wedderburn.

"Very; but there is one slight obstacle to such secret promenades—"

"And that is—"

"My good pleasure. There are but two keys to the lock—a patent one—I have them both in safe keeping."

CHAPTER XXXV.

A RENT IN A CLOUD.

There are a kind of men so loose of soul
That in their sleep will mutter their affairs.
—*Shakspeare.*

There was nothing more to be seen, and the party returned to the drawing-room. Claudia was very silent, and Lord Wedderburn watched her curiously, but could form no theory in his own mind as to her object in showing so much interest in the house. Purely feminine inquisitiveness he was sure it could not be, for apart from the fact that he knew Claudia Wynne to be free from all such petty weaknesses, he had discerned an undercurrent of meaning in all her questionings, and so carefully observant a manner in the way she took in the surroundings of each room at a glance, as it were, that quite convinced him there was an ulterior motive in her seeming whim that lay beyond his cognizance.

Claudia's thoughts were too much occupied to notice the close watch he kept upon her. She hardly knew what she feared, but that Lord Nortonshall's possession of the phials boded no good she felt sure.

"I must have one of those keys," was her first thought. "The poison must be recovered at any cost, and if I can only secure an entrance into the house I may contrive to accomplish my plan quietly. But how is it to be managed? Where has he got them? I dread to think of it."

But nothing could be done, and, afraid of attracting notice, she shook off her abstraction, and exerted herself to enter into the conversation. But there was one of the guests who was not deceived by the apparent gayety of her manner—one who could guess at the deeper current which ran beneath the surface that was outwardly so gay and sparkling.

"Remember your promise to me about Brown," she whispered to him as the party began to break up. "I wish particularly to see him, and unknown to his master."

"H'm!" answered Lord Wedderburn. "I hardly see how it is to be managed. Nortonshall would be sure to suspect something wrong if he found you in conference with his servant, so it wouldn't do to risk it in this house, but you might manage to see him at your own."

"How?"

"Ah! that's to be settled. Will you leave it to me?"

"Certainly."

"I think I see a way. Does he never come to you with messages?"

"Oh, no."

"Nor any one from Nortonshall?"

"Yes, a boy."

"Well, if you'll trust it to me I'll get the messenger changed. Brown shall come for the future, and by that means you can see him without exciting any suspicion."

"Oh, thanks, thanks!" she exclaimed.

"But won't you give me a hint as to what you require?" asked his lordship. "I am not curious, but I might be able to help you better if I knew what you are working for. At present I am entirely in the dark."

"No, no, I cannot tell you," Claudia said, hurriedly. "Do not ask me, my lord. Indeed, indeed I am very sorry to appear ungrateful, but I dare not take any one into my confidence as yet."

"Do just as you think best," he said, kindly. "I only hoped to be able to aid you more effectually; but I have no wish to pry into anything it is your desire to keep secret. Hush! here comes Nortonshall."

All the visitors had departed by this time, and Lord Nortonshall came to offer his escort to Claudia. She had no choice but to accept, and thanked him, at the same time casting an appealing glance at the other gentleman, who answered it by saying—

"You may as well take me too. I am going in the same direction, and my cab is not here, so be charitable."

His lordship muttered an inward curse at being again balked of a *tête-à tête* with Claudia; but there was no help for it without betraying himself, and he muttered an ungracious assent to the proposition of his friend, who received it with an air of being totally unconscious that his company was not wanted.

The drive to Claudia Wynne's house was a silent one, the old adage of "Two are company, three none," being fully exemplified, to Lord Nortonshall's intense disgust, his friend's inward amusement at his discomfiture, and the great relief of Claudia herself. After all she had already staked, she dreaded to risk the chance of a quarrel with her titled adorer, but felt at the same time that she could not command herself so far as to listen to the language he would be sure to utter were they alone.

Dorothy was waiting up for her young mistress, and met her at the door with a very grave face. The good soul did not at all like her foster-child being mixed up with such a set, and though she knew Claudia too well to doubt the purity of her motives, and had a perfect faith in all she did, it still grieved her faithful heart that her mistress should, even in a good cause, come into contact with others less pure in conduct than herself.

The two gentlemen bade adieu to Claudia, and went away, but not without noticing old Dorothy's displeased expression of face, and commenting on it as they drove from the house.

"La Claudia is in for a lecture from that quarter," Lord Wedderburn remarked, with a smile. "The old lady looked very sour at our appearance with her young mistress."

"That's nothing fresh—to me, at all events," replied the other. "She usually favors me with the very blackest looks whenever I present myself. I shall try and persuade Claudia to send her about her business."

"H'm! I think you are hardly likely to succeed in that. I have heard her speak most affectionately of her duenna, and I'm sure she's very fond of the old woman. Claudia Wynne is not the sort of woman to part with an old friend unless she has good reason for it."

Lord Nortonshall growled an inaudible reply, and his friend having arrived near home, they parted.

Lord Wedderburn's estimate of Claudia was perfectly correct. She would not have parted with her faithful old friend on any provocation. Sour looks and reproachful words passed by alike unnoticed. Dorothy might be as cross as she liked; her mistress knew her value and her faithful love too well not to bear it all for the sake of her many years' truth and devotion.

But Dorothy was not cross to-night—only sad. She sighed as she closed and barred the door after Claudia's entrance, and her face looked very downcast and troubled.

"Why, whatever is the matter, Dorothy?" asked her young mistress, trying to appear cheerful. "You are not angry with me for keeping you up so late, are you?"

"No, not angry—only grieved."

"Grieved! And for what?"

"Because I see you in company that is shame to an honest woman."

"Shame!"

"Yes, shame. Ah, my darling, do you know what they are beginning to say of you?"

"They! Who?"

"Everybody."

"'Everybody' is a long word, Dorothy. I don't suppose there are many people in London who care to trouble their heads about my affairs, either one way or the other."

"Maybe, maybe; but, my dear, I thought my heart would break when I heard your name lightly spoken of no later than to-day."

Claudia grew very pale, then flushed again with indignant shame; but she drew her old servant closer to her side with a gesture of affection as she spoke.

"Do not you misjudge me, Dorothy," she said, in a low, broken voice. "For the last few weeks I have almost thought that my heart would break too. I know what is being spoken concerning me as well as you can tell me, but I have put my hand to the plough and cannot go back. I know that the good name which my mother bade me cherish as sacred above all earthly things is now at stake, and yet I cannot do other than risk it. I have a powerful motive which urges me on, but I cannot tell even you, my best and truest friend in this world, what it is—only this much: I am striving to prevent a crime—a dreadful crime—which circumstances might hereafter lay at my door. I have neither proof nor evidence to aid me, but must needs work alone, Heaven help me! at the cost, maybe, of good fame and reputation."

"You are speaking wildly, and in riddles, my dear child," said Dorothy, smoothing her soft hair with a caressing hand. "Perhaps you will think more calmly after a night's sleep, and you will think differently."

"That can never be until I have succeeded in my project, Dorothy. Listen to me. When you hear them speak of me as that man's— Ah, I cannot speak the word even to you; but when you are told that I submit to his caresses for the sake of his gifts, and love him for his flattery, remember what I tell you now—that it is a lie. I swear it to you by all I ever held most sacred in this world. I hate him, dear old Dorothy—hate him as man was never hated by woman yet—and you shall see the day, if I do not die in the effort I am making now, when I will fling all his gifts in a heap at his feet, and tell him how Claudia Wynne only courted his smiles that she might have the glory of unmasking his evil designs."

"Hush! You are exciting yourself too much. Will you not let me help you? I will be silent and faithful."

"Faithful unto death, and silent as the grave—I know that full well," said Claudia, warmly; "and when the time comes, I promise you shall help. I may need a friendly arm to lean on; but for the present I must work alone. You have not heard anything of my bottles?"

"Those lost from the casket?"

"Yes."

"Alas! nothing."

"Nor any of the others?"

"No, mademoiselle. I made every possible inquiry, as you bade me, but to no purpose. Such a loss is very alarming."

"It is, indeed. Still more so, if, as I suspect, they have been taken by some one who understands their properties, and means to use them. I shall never know peace until I have them back in my keeping."

Dorothy said no more, but persuaded Claudia to go to bed and rest. She saw her cheeks were pale and her eyes glittering, and feared she might be ill.

Claudia was, indeed, far from well, though she made no complaint. She was terribly changed from the brilliant and successful actress who had made so great an impression two short years before. Not that the public could see any alteration. To the crowded audiences at the Elysium she was still the fascinating actress, whose every movement was grace, and whose slightest word was music; but none the less the excitement was telling upon her, and her private troubles added to the feeling of depression which was wearing her down, and Dorothy had hardly got her to her bedroom before a mist rose to her eyes and she sank insensible upon the floor.

It was on this same night that Austin Bertram was stricken down, and Frank Vavasour, who had been out, was met by his landlady with the intelligence, and a desire that he would go up to the sick man's room.

Frank was hardly surprised at the news, for, in common with every one who knew him, he had remarked the altered, haggard appearance of the gay man about town for some time past, and he took his place at the sick man's bedside till the doctor arrived, which event he awaited with no small alarm, as the delirium of the patient rapidly increased, and he knew not what steps to take; but the man of medicine came at last, and delivered his verdict with professional coolness.

"Brain-fever," he said, after a cursory examination, "and likely to be a pretty severe attack. You must get a nurse for him."

"Can you help me to one?" asked Frank.

"Give me a pen and ink. I'll send for one at once. He must not be left for a moment to himself."

So in due course a note was sent off, and the nurse arrived and took up her post at Austin Bertram's bedside.

She arranged the sick chamber with a practiced hand, and then took her station to alleviate the suffering which she could not cure.

Frank retired when he had seen his friend was in good hands, but he passed a very ill night. His thoughts were full of Claudia Wynne, and the way in which her name was linked with that of the man he hated most on earth. He could never meet Lord Nortonshall again, and but for the love he still bore for Alma, and the regard which prompted him to stay and watch the course of events with the actress, he would have left England at once.

These thoughts kept him awake for nearly all the night, and when he went into Bertram's chamber the next morning, he was looking nearly as ill as the fever-stricken man who was tossing in the bed.

The nurse herself looked weary, and Frank remarked it.

"It will be different very soon, sir," she answered, with a smile. "I've been away from these sort of cases for a while, and had regular rest and all that sort of thing, which makes one's work come hard at first."

"Have you had much trouble with your patient?"

"Not to say very much, sir; but it is very wearying to be constantly watching a person tossing and twisting, and having to listen to all sorts of stuff as no one can possibly understand."

"Has he been talking, then?"

"I should think so. Why, he's never stopped mutter, mutter, sometimes low, sometimes loud, and always about one thing."

"Indeed!"

"Perhaps I ought to say one person. It has been the same thing over and over again all through the livelong night. There he goes again."

The sick man had spoken, and Frank Vavasour turned round startled, for from his lips the words came clear and distinct.

"Jasper Glosson."

The name was strange and unfamiliar, but it struck him strangely somehow, and he said, half aloud—

"What does he mean? Who can Jasper Glosson be?"

"I've been trying to make that out myself," the nurse said. "He's talked about no one else; and from all he's said it's the name of a very bad man. He's raved about murder, and revenge, and trying to kill a woman, and I don't know what else, but always with that name, and mixed up with a lot of foreign talk."

"All ravings though, I suppose?"

"I don't know, sir; there's many a truth told by a man when he's like that. I've heard men, and women, too, for that matter, rave on like him, and it's turned out to be true in the long run."

Frank was about to make some trivial reply, when again the name spoken by the sick man struck upon his ear, but this time he spoke at greater length.

"Jasper Glosson has sworn to do it, and he never breaks his oath!"

There was another pause, though the patient still kept muttering, but inaudibly, till another name escaped him.

"Maddalina, ha, ha, ha! Maddalina Wynne!"

Frank started.

"Great heavens!" he muttered, "Claudia's mother! What can this man have known of her?"

CHAPTER XXXVI.

TAKING COUNSEL.

I pray you
To take heed how you travel in this matter;
Give to a rogue but rope enough, he'll hang—
So shall you see in this. —*Old Play.*

The words which he had heard fall from Austin Bertram's lips kept ringing in the ears of Frank with a persistence for which he could in no way account. After all, the name might be nothing more than a coincidence, though it was very uncommon to hear the soft Italian wedded to the harsher gutturals of the English language.

"Jasper Glosson—Maddalina Wynne. Why should he harp upon those names?"

This was the question that kept forcing itself upon Frank Vavasour, who, as soon as he could get away in the morning, set out for Claudia's house.

The first name he had never heard before to his knowledge, but the second had been made very familiar to him by Claudia's frequent and loving references to her dead mother.

"Jasper Glosson."

He went on repeating the unfamiliar name to himself as the cab rolled rapidly along, but for some time with no further effect than to puzzle his brain in a vain attempt to recall it to his memory.

Suddenly he lay back in his seat with a strange tightening at his heart, which almost seemed to cease beating at the terrible thought which, like a lightning stroke, had flashed upon him.

"Jasper Glosson! the glove! 'J. G.!'" he gasped, rather than spoke to himself, as the recollection of the initials on the glove he had found and afterward lost in so mysterious a manner came into his mind.

Yes, they were surely identical, and it was a strange coincidence from Austin Bertram's lips. He must surely know the man, perhaps was implicated in his crimes. All was a confused whirl in the young man's mind. He could not fit the broken pieces together, but he resolved to tell all he suspected to Claudia. She might be able to throw some ray of light upon the matter; if not, he would hasten back to this man's bedside, hear all he could, and see if he could gather from his ravings any clue to the terrible secret which had been so long and so well concealed.

"Merciful powers!" he exclaimed, aloud; "if I should at last have struck upon the track. Am I to discover the murderer of my darling's father—my own old friend? I pray Heaven it may be so. It would give at least some purpose to my wasted life—some object to carry me out of my own bitter memories."

The very thought seemed to brace his energies, but the excitement under which he labored had left him very pale, and when he reached the house, Claudia remarked his looks with an alarm and a solicitude which gave him a pang at his heart when he remembered the unselfish love which prompted it.

She had not long risen. Dorothy had wished to send for a doctor when she recovered from her swoon, but Claudia insisted that it was nothing, though her worn looks in the morning belied her words, and Frank could hardly have failed to perceive how ill she was looking had not his thoughts been so busily engaged with the strange doubts that possessed him.

"I am quite well, quite well indeed," he said, in answer to her first words; "that is to say, bodily well." And then he noticed, for the first time, that there was a change in her, and his heart smote him, as he continued, "But you are not looking well yourself, Claudia; are you sure there is nothing wrong with you?"

"I think there must be," she answered, with a sad smile; "and I sometimes feel inclined to wish that I may never be well again in this world."

"Claudia!"

"Oh, I cannot help saying so, Frank. Life seems to hold nothing good for me now. I have no home, no country, friends, or love to cheer me."

And as she spoke she bowed her head upon her hands, and burst into such a flood of passionate tears as she had never shed before. He strove, but without avail, to soothe her, and he was obliged to let her weep on until the force of her tears had spent itself.

"Do not mind me," she said at length, "I am wicked and ungrateful to say such things. I know that I have many kind friends—you the foremost amongst them; but I am very tired and unhappy. Can you guess where I was last night?"

She looked at him in a deprecating manner, and he understood.

"Yes."

"Dorothy was angry when I returned—no, not angry, but sad at my going there—and it all makes me so unhappy."

"I am very sorry for it, too, Claudia. I feel as assured of your innocence as I should of an angel's, but all do not know you as I do, and it grieves me to hear you lightly spoken of, and know that I can offer nothing in your defence but my own convictions. Can you not contrive what you want without—"

"Appearing to encourage Lord Nortonshall? No, Frank, I cannot. I feel that I am open to suspicion; but there is no other means of gaining my object. Were it to be known what I was searching for, I should be ridiculed—nay, even worse—thought to be mad most probably; and yet I am as convinced that I am not mistaken as I am of my own identity."

"But why will you not confide in your friends? Let me share in this work you have set yourself to do."

"No, no—you least of all could help me. And yet, I will trust you, Frank, on one condition."

"I promise, whatever it is."

"You must not breathe one word of what I shall tell you until I give you leave."

"Go on; I have promised."

"Ah, I know I may trust you. Listen, then: Lord Nortonshall intends to—to—"

"What?"

"Murder his wife."

"Claudia, are you mad?"

"Hush—hear me out. He has stolen the phials from my casket—I know he has—thinking I should not discover their loss, or if I did, never suspect him."

"What, in Heaven's name has put such a suspicion into your head? I know that Alma has strange fancies—she told me so; but you—"

"Are certain of it," she broke in, emphatically. "I told you that if I gave voice to my thoughts I should only be laughed at."

"I am not laughing at you, Claudia; but this idea is too horrible."

"Oh, you would believe me if you had seen, as I have, the fiendish look upon his face the night when he returned, and the manner in which he spoke of her. He is always talking to me of the probability of her death, and has even gone so far as to offer me his hand when it takes place."

"The villain!"

"But I dare not show that I suspect him; it might but hasten what I dread to even think about. I will stop the mischief if I can. I will either recover the phials, or failing that, contrive some means of deceiving him as to their contents, and make him use the narcotic instead of the poison. I don't know how yet, but I mean to save the poor lady, and to this end it is that I allow him to believe I love him, and force myself to listen to him until my very soul is sick."

"But why this strange interest in Lady Nortonshall? You do not know her."

"True, but you do, and you love her."

"And you would save her for my sake?"

"Yes, Frank, for your sake."

"I hardly know what to say to you, Claudia," said Frank, much touched at her unselfish devotion. "You have set yourself a terrible task, and were it not that human life, and such a life, is threatened, I would say, let this man go his own way, and the punishment be on his own head."

"But you will not say it. Enough of this for the present. You have something on your mind to tell me."

"Yes, you are right—something which perplexes me very much. Bertram is ill, has brain fever, and as a consequence of his disease raves fearfully: but there is a method in his madness. Did your mother ever mention his name?"

"My mother? No! Why do you ask me?"

"For this reason: he has mentioned her name in his delirium, coupled with incoherent mutterings; but her name was plain—Maddalina Wynne."

"I cannot understand. Can you make out nothing that he says of her?"

"No; but he spoke of another person at the same time, as though there was some connection between them."

"What is the other name? Can you remember it?"

"Yes, and I have grave suspicions about it. Did you ever hear her speak of Jasper Glosson?"

Claudia's face grew deadly pale as she heard the words, and but for Frank's supporting arm she would have fallen.

"Are you ill," he asked in alarm.

"No, no—I am better now. Jasper Glosson! Is it possible that I should hear that name again?"

"You do know him, then?"

"Aye! He was the man I told you of who dragged my father into ruin, and would have taken my mother's life—the man whom I could prove a thief and murderer, should I but ever find him. I have the papers still which nearly cost my mother so dear, and if we ever meet, let him look to it. But tell me all you know."

"I have heard nothing yet but those two names," Frank answered.

"Was there no place mentioned—no clue by which this man Glosson could be found?"

"None."

"Did you never hear Bertram speak of him before?"

"Never; but I suspect he was the murderer of Mr. Bouverie—Alma's father."

"How?"

"It is only a small thing to found a suspicion on; but the glove which was picked up on the spot, and I lost so oddly after keeping it in my possession for so long a time, was marked with the initials 'J. G.,' and Bertram never speaks of this man in his wanderings without coupling his name with murder."

"Strange!" mused Claudia.

Frank turned suddenly to her.

"Can you remember at all what this man was like, Claudia?"

"Perfectly. Though I was so young, I have a vivid recollection of him. He was tall, with brown hair and eyes, and a very clear complexion."

"Had he any mark or scar about his face by which he might be recognized?"

"Yes, there was a cut across here," and she indicated the place on her chin; "a white scar, shrivelled at the edges."

"And he wore no beard then?"

"I could not have noticed the scar if he did."

"Nor whiskers?"

"Neither. His face was perfectly bare; but whether from youth or because he shaved, I could not say."

Frank looked puzzled, and Claudia had to speak to him to rouse him from the revery into which he seemed to have fallen.

"But why did you ask me all those questions?" she inquired.

"Because—I hardly know, Claudia—an insane notion took hold of me that—"

"What?"

"Why, that Austin Bertram might turn out to be the very man he raves so much and so wildly about."

"Impossible," said Claudia, decidedly. "I have looked very close at Mr. Bertram, for his voice raised a feeling of repugnance within me when I first heard it, and I almost imagined the same thing; but it cannot be he. No! You will have to look elsewhere for the villain."

A knock came at the door and a servant appeared, who spoke a few words in a low tone to Claudia.

"I will see him directly," she answered. "You must leave me now, Frank—it is a man on business. Find out what you can of this affair. Heaven is not blind, and will aid us in the search."

She shook hands with him, and he departed, but not until he had recognized in the decent-looking man who was waiting in the hall, Lord Nortonshall's valet, Brown.

(To be continued in our next. Commenced in No. 9.)

A Lonely Duel.

A duel without witnesses was fought lately in Taney county, Missouri. John Goforth and Simon Melville went out to hunt deer. Each was armed with the old-fashioned squirrel rifle. Goforth said to Melville, "I hear that you have been lying on me." "What did you hear I said?" asked Melville. "That I had been beating my wife." "And so you have," replied Melville. "Those who told it lied; and when you repeated it, you also lied, and you knew at the time you were lying." These were pretty plain words, and they brought about some pretty plain shooting. Both men agreed to step off thirty yards each, wheel at the word, and fire immediately after wheeling. They did so. Melville, when he had measured off his thirty steps, called out "Wheel," and both men turned and fired. Goforth was shot in the right arm, and Melville in the right shoulder. Both wounds were painful. They managed, however, to walk into Forsythe, where a physician extracted both balls, and consoled Goforth with the information, that unless he was very careful he might have to cut his arm off. This version of the case agrees in the main with the stories of both men.

Under the Sea.

A joint stock company has been organized in France to tunnel the Straits of Dover, and connect England with France by rail. Dover and Calais, the points to be connected, are twenty-three miles apart, and the formation to be penetrated is believed to be nothing but an immense bed of chalk, of at least eight hundred feet in thickness. Machines for sinking wells in chalk deposits have been invented, which in twenty-four hours will bore a hole through such material fifty-four feet deep and seven feet in diameter. The company estimates the cost of a railroad tunnel twenty-three miles long at about $50,000,000. No subsidies are asked for from either government, but the company asks the monopoly of the tunnel business between the two countries. The most astonishing thing is that so facile an enterprise has not been undertaken before, and can only be accounted for upon the hypothesis that some people doubt that the bottom of the English Channel is all chalk.

HER OWN WAY.

BY SIBYL KEIM.

It was spring, and the sun shone and the peach-trees were in blossom, and Rae was resolved. No matter what her aunt advised, Rae had determined not to be dependent any longer, and to-morrow she would be on her way to Brambleton, where she was to be a governess. At eighteen, life never looks very dark. "And," reasoned Rae, "it will not be as if I were going to a stranger, for I know Mrs. Hawthorne quite well."

So, in the dim, uncertain light of early day, Rachel stood at her aunt's door in her gray travelling-dress, and as Mrs. Arrat bent to kiss the girl's pretty lips, she said, perhaps with some misgiving, "I did not wish you to go; but you had your own way about it—you were always headstrong."

"Good-bye, and thanks for your compliment, dearest aunt," laughed Rae. "When summer comes, your headstrong niece will come back, safe and sound."

And as the carriage rolled away she put her curly head out of the window to cry "Adieu," and kiss a slim little hand to her aunt in the doorway. When she reached the station, she found Mr. Leigh, in whose company she was to travel, already waiting for her.

"Ten minutes more and you would have been too late," he said, good-humoredly, showing her the face of his huge watch.

"Ten minutes! Why, that's a small eternity," she cried, gayly. "You wouldn't be in such a hurry if you only knew what a troublesome charge I am. I shall stop all the 'prize-package' boys, and insist upon buying every newspaper that I see."

Not at all alarmed by this prospect, Mr. Leigh conducted Rae to the cars, found her a seat by a window, and stowed away her travelling bag. Rae first looked at the scenery for five minutes, and then began to scan the passengers; but not seeing anything more interesting than a squalling baby, and a stout lady who kept dropping her purse and making wild dives after it under the seats, she gave it up and finally settled down to enjoy "Silvia." After following the fortunes of that capricious maiden for some time, she grew tired and looked out of the window.

"Oh, what lovely lily-pods!" she murmured, softly. "Good gracious!" as she caught a glimpse of an irate woman spanking a carrot-headed infant, while in the foreground two small and dirty youths fled affrighted. This moving tableau was too much for Rae's gravity. She laughed softly, and clapped her slim hands together gently; but the moment after she remembered where she was, and sank back crimson, having at the same time the consolation of hearing an old gentleman remark audibly to a young man by his side—

"Natural little girl! Wonder what amused her!"

"Little girl," indeed! Rae retired into the pages of "Silvia" in disgust. Away and away they whirled, until the Brambleton Station was reached, and Rae rose from her seat with a sudden tremor. Oh! perhaps it would be harder than she had thought. With a fatherly "Good-bye, my dear," Mr. Leigh helped her down the steps, and as they walked down the platform, Rae's keen, dark eyes descried a pretty little carriage waiting there, and before she knew it, some one was kissing her, asking if she felt tired, and inquiring after Mrs. Arrat, all in a breath.

Bidding Mr. Leigh farewell, the two ladies stepped into the carriage. It must be understood that though Brambleton was considerably more than a village, still it could hardly be called a city—however, it was as pretty a place as one would wish to see.

"Rae, my dear," said Mrs. Hawthorne, "I don't think you will have any trouble with Mimi and Romie. James says they are spoiled; but I assure you they are the sweetest children in the world."

"Children generally like me," answered Rae; "so I don't think that Mimi or Romie will be the least trouble."

When they reached Mrs. Hawthorne's charming residence, Mimi and her brother were duly presented to their "nice new governess," Rae Arundel. They were two very pretty, and—must it be confessed?—much spoiled little persons.

They grew very intimate—disagreeably so, a misanthropic bachelor might have thought—embracing Rae violently and demanding "stories."

As Mrs. Hawthorne looked at the girl, with Romie on one arm of her chair and Mimi on the other, she nodded her little blonde head and congratulated herself on having obtained "the right thing." If his Satanic Majesty himself had remarked upon Mimi's beauty, it is to be feared that Mrs. Hawthorne would have thought him "quite a pleasant sort of a person—odd-looking to be sure, but distingué—and not as bad as uncharitable people believe him to be."

Rae did make a pretty picture as she told wondrous fairy-tales to the children. She had what Owen Meredith calls a "primrose face," with dark, yet bright hair, curling in short rings all over her head, wide, dark eyes, and the sweetest mouth in the world, truly "made to bring death to life."

Days passed on and both Mr. and Mrs. Hawthorne were more and more pleased with Miss Arundel, while that young lady thought teaching delightful work, for she was treated like one of the family; and as Mrs. Hawthorne's house was very gay, she had undoubtedly a nice time.

Among Mrs. Hawthorne's acquaintance was an amiable idiot, Adolphus Watts, commonly called Dolly, who insisted on giving every one his reminiscences of the past, without regard to commas or periods.

One sunny afternoon as Rae, her daily duties done, sat in the south parlor with Mimi, she took up a volume of poems, and saw written upon the fly-leaf R. St. E. in a man's handwriting. "Who can that be?" she wondered.

"Whose book is this, Mimi?" she asked, idly.

"Uncle Rémy's—he lives in Canton," the child answered.

Mrs. Hawthorne had gone visiting, and the house was very still; but presently Rae heard a ring at the bell and a step outside, and before she could wonder who it was, a gentleman entered.

"Uncle Rémy!" ejaculated Mimi, rushing impulsively at him and casting herself into his embrace, professing herself delighted to see him. The youth was visibly staggered, for Mimi was no light weight. Now Mimi, though her idea of introductions was somewhat misty, was not to be daunted, so she boldly said, "This is my uncle, Miss Rae—Uncle Rémy, this is Miss Rae, and isn't she pretty?" she added, feeling that some slight remark of this kind would be, at the same time, graceful and appropriate.

"After such an introduction need we be very formal?" asked Rémy, merriment struggling against politeness.

Rae first smiled, and then began to laugh, and as she afterward described it, "we laughed like two idiotic geese!"

"Mrs. Hawthorne is not at home"—here she was interrupted by Rémy, who said,

"Never mind; no doubt I can amuse myself until her return;" and so saying, he seated himself beside Rae, and began by inquiring how she liked Brambleton.

"Oh! ever so much," she answered, rather primly.

"I suppose you have seen the lions?" he asked.

"Lions!" broke in Mimi. "Why, there's no circus in town!"

"My dear," admonished her sage uncle, "little girls should be seen and not heard, and are therefore more for ornament than use. As I was about to remark, the lions are the Hermitage and the Lover's Leap."

"Was there ever a place without a Lover's Leap?" asked Rae, arching her eyebrows.

"I fear not, Miss Rae; lovers seem to jump from high places without at all regarding the maxim, 'Look before you leap.' In fact, it seems to be a monomania with them. And as for the Hermitage, where a hermit is said to have once dwelt, I must say of that venerable person that he was rather untidy, for when he died he left his old boots and oyster-shells lying around promiscuously," explained Rémy.

Just then Mrs. Hawthorne entered and overwhelmed him with questions concerning his visit.

Some days after at the breakfast-table, Rémy said, "Miss Rae, as you have never seen the Hermitage, don't you think it would be pleasant to row up there in the 'Sylphide?'"

"Charming!" she cried, her wide, dark eyes sparkling.

"Well, then, this afternoon I will take you," he answered.

"James," observed Mrs. Hawthorne, addressing the mild individual at the foot of the table, "don't you remember how fond you were of boating? Suppose we make up a party and have a picnic?"

"A capital idea, Marian," assented Rémy. "When shall we go?"

"Put off your visit to the Hermitage until next Friday, Rae, and then we can all go together," said Mrs. Hawthorne, turning to Rae.

So the matter was settled, and when Friday dawned brightly, Mrs. Hawthorne was in raptures. Dolly Watts and a few others were invited, and they started in two boats, Rémy, Dolly, Rae and Kate Erle, one of Mrs. Hawthorne's acquaintances in one, and the Hawthorne family, including those delightful cherubs, in another.

Dolly could not row, so turning to Kate, Rémy asked if she would like to take an oar, rowing being a favorite amusement in Brambleton.

"I can't," she said, mournfully; "the boat turns round and round when I try."

"Can you, Miss Arundel?" he inquired of Rae.

"Yes, a little," she answered, flushing shyly, and shaking back her wandering curls.

"Let us row together—you take one oar, and I will take the other. The boat is so light that it will be easy work," so saying, Rémy handed an oar to Rae, who took her seat, and then they pushed off and glided into the river. It was pretty to see Rae rowing, her slender hands clasping the oar, while her sleeves, slipping back from the round wrist, showed her white, blue-veined arms.

"Don't we row nicely together?" observed Rémy, unheard by the loquacious Kate and Dolly, who were chattering at the other end.

"Yes, and how prettily the water ripples around the boat," answered Rae, stopping for a moment and bending over the side to look into the water.

"Are you looking for Undine?" he asked.

"I saw only my own reflection," she laughed; "and I have no wish to be a second Undine."

"Ah! you mustn't slip away as she did," he said, very low, looking down into her face, his blue eyes saying much more than his lips. Those troublesome curls! they would fall upon her cheek and hide her bright eyes. In due time they reached the island upon which the Hermitage stood, and landed with no greater mishap than the falling overboard of a bundle of crackers, which Dolly immediately fished up out of the water; but alas! the crackers were, as Rae pathetically said, "hors de combat."

"Rémy," whispered Mrs. Hawthorne, as that youth assisted her in carrying a basket, "Rémy, Kate Erle is a nice girl, and—and—very rich. You must be attentive to her; I invited Dolly Watts on Rae's account."

"Hang Kate Erle!" murmured he, stalking majestically away, and leaned against a rock in gloomy meditation.

Rémy was very handsome; but, like the farmer's daughter in the ballad, his "face was his fortune," so of course, if he ever chose to marry, it would have to be a rich girl.

"Uncle Rémy!" exclaimed Romie, giving him a violent poke with a parasol; "come and look at the Hermitage."

"Yes, my child," answered Rémy, resignedly, following the cherub to the Hermitage, where he found the other three investigating; and discovered in a corner, a huge pair of shoes, "three yards long at the very least, and the Hermit must have worn them to humble his carnal pride," as this graceless scoffer said, and forthwith rigged one of them like a boat, and launched it in the river, naming it the *Lovely Polly*.

"Oh! what lovely blue flowers down in the hollow," exclaimed Kate, who was in the habit of going into small raptures over the beauties of nature.

Of course Rémy could not do less than offer to pluck them for her, so they walked away, leaving Dolly and Rae alone.

He began—

"Miss Arundel, did you notice the sunset last evening?"

Rae—"Not particularly."

Dolly—"'Twas glor'us! I do admire a sunset"—then apostrophising the air—"the po'try of nature minglin' with the grander of eternity."

Rae laughed faintly, and then tried to turn it into a cough.

Dolly (cursing himself)—"Cold, I see—bad? 'Minds me of the time I went a snow-ballin'. One winter in Beachville—stood on a porch with three young ladies; says they—'Don't the snow look beautiful?' Says I, 'Yes it does;' says I, 'wouldn't I like to rub your face in that snow!' Says they, 'Come on!' So we went; and I picked up some snow and fired it at her head—and then they all pitched on me; and two held me down, while the third young lady rubbed me face in snow!!! Playful! eh, Miss Arundel? Cold bad, I see."

Rae's cold increased to such an alarming extent, that had not Mrs. Hawthorne called Dolly, there is no telling what might have happened.

"Mrs. Hawthorne is calling me. Must I go—how can I leave these? Ha, ha!" and Dolly went off intensely amused at his own wit.

"Tableau vivant!" exclaimed Rémy, suddenly appearing upon the field of action, suppressed merriment sparkling in his eyes. "Young lady attacked in a lonely place by Dolly Watts—escape impossible—despair depicted on the young lady's countenance—Hermitage in the back-ground—St. Evremonde to the rescue—blue fire—grand finale!"

"Yes; only you didn't come to the rescue; you stood by and laughed."

"I thought you must certainly wish to hear the remainder of that anecdote about those piquant and strikingly original ladies!"

"How funny he is!" said Rae.

Rémy laughed, and somewhat enigmatically called Dolly "a hilarious fragment of masonry."

"Here are some flowers I plucked for you," he added, tossing a handful of blossoms into her lap.

"Thank you. Oh! they have no perfume, though they are very pretty, and quite like forget-me-nots."

"Wish they were," was Rémy's brief response.

"And why?"

"So that you would never forget this day," he answered, lapsing into sentimentality.

"But even if they were forget-me-nots, I might throw them away," argued Rae.

"Very true; but let us pretend they are forget-me-nots, and promise me you will not forget this time. Will you promise?" this in a tender whisper.

"What particular thing do you wish me to remember? the oyster-shells, or—or the thistles?" asked Rae, who was in a teasing mood.

"May I take a seat?" inquired Rémy, who manlike, seeing that he had rather the worst of it, wished to change the subject. So saying, he seated himself on a log, and idly began to pull to pieces the flowers he held in his hand.

"Men are usually so cruel to flowers," Rae began; but just then Kate came sauntering by, and stopped to ask Rémy, in a tone of infantile curiosity, whether "the hermit really lived—truly now!"

"Not a doubt of it, Miss Erle; are you so skeptical that it requires more than those boots to convince you?"

In this manner they talked, until joined by Dolly Watts, whose face was crimson from his praiseworthy efforts to make the kettle boil, gypsy fashion; but nobly disregarding this, he propped himself gracefully against the wall, and began affably—

"Like picnics, Miss Erle?"

"Oh dear, yes," answered Kate, in an animated tone, quite ready for Dolly Watts, if no one nicer could be procured.

The day passed away, and the sun was dipping behind the trees, when our pleasure-seekers were ready to go. Mindful of his worldly-wise sister's advice, Rémy undertook to teach Kate how to row.

She was so very timid, indeed she couldn't manage that great heavy oar. And oh! wouldn't Mr. St. Evremonde please show her how? Yes; Mr. St. Evremonde would show her how; but it must be confessed he was rather disgusted with her clumsy affectation. If she had "done" it prettily, it would have been different; but it was so very palpable!

Meanwhile Rae sat in the stern of the boat, dabbling her hand in the water, and thinking that picnics were not delightful after all. A sage conclusion, my foolish Rae! Presently they reached the landing, and Rémy helped Rae and Miss Erle out, while Dolly endangered their lives by stumbling over oars, baskets, and other things.

When they reached home it was quite late, and Rémy retired to the garden to enjoy a cigar. And he puffed smoke into the faces of the roses, and fell to wondering as he stared at the curling smoke-wreaths, why it was that pretty girls were always poor, and why a fellow invariably fell in love with them?

It was nearly time for the summer holidays, when one afternoon Rémy asked Rae to go on the river with him. As they had had a good deal of practice, they made the Sylphide fairly fly over the water; but by and by, they rowed more slowly.

"Miss Rae," said he, breaking the silence; "to-morrow I am going." Rae did not answer, but used her oar so energetically that she drove the Sylphide into a bed of rushes. "Aren't you going to say you are sorry?" he asked growing pathetic; Rae was deeply interested in the growth of the rushes. "Rae, can I believe that you are really sorry?" he cried, impulsively; and dropping the oar, he caught both her hands in his. "Say yes," he implored.

"Yes," said Rae, tremulously.

That aroused him; now he had done it! Oh, what a fool he was; but wasn't she the sweetest girl in the world? The two rowed home very quietly, and when they were once more on terra firma, Rémy said to the girl, "We needn't tell any one, need we, dear?" crushing the poor little fingers in his strong clasp. You see, he felt rather guilty. Only a few more moments and they would reach Mrs. Hawthorne's—blissful moments!

"You know, Rae," he said, "I'm going to-morrow; but I'll—I'll write."

"And I am going to my aunt's, for the holidays, in a short time," she answered. That night they parted as mere acquaintances might have done, and the next morning when she was up in the school-room, she knew by the sounds below that he was going, and she could not even go to the window to see him ride away. "And he could go away without telling me good-bye!" she thought with a sudden pang.

In a few days it was vacation time, and Rae started for her aunt's, ready triumphantly to prove that she was "safe and sound."

At first she was so nervous when the letters were brought, that Mrs. Arrat inquired, looking at the girl over her spectacles, "Who is your correspondent, Rachel?"

"Little Mimi Hawthorne promised to write to me," replied Rae, blushing guiltily.

For two weeks she was patient and hopeful; but after that she began to despair. Ah! that summer-time—what fevers of hope, what sickening disappointments it brought.

"Surely," she would say, "if he had not forgotten me, he would have written at least once;" and then she would look at the flowers he had given her on the day of the picnic, with wistful eyes.

The summer went, and the time for her return to Brambleton came. She was a very different Rae from the one who had started in the spring, all hope and happiness; but now—the wailing of the autumn winds seemed drearier than ever before, and the crisp fall of the leaves and the cry of the southward-flying birds, seemed a dirge for the spring-time in which she had been so happy.

When she reached Brambleton, Mimi was in ecstacies, and kept up a continual chatter from the station to Mrs. Hawthorne's. And when Rae went to her room to rest, her solitude was invaded by her pupils, who had much valuable information to impart.

Perching herself on Rae's knee, Mimi began, "We've been so lonely without you, Miss Rae, mamma and all. Spect Uncle Rémy was, too, when he came back; he's here now, and where do you think he is?" Rae had no idea. "Why, he's out boating with Miss Erle; they're engaged, and I don't think she's nice one bit, or pretty either, do you?" added Mimi with charming candor.

Poor Rae! "Mimi," she said, "won't you go now? I'm so tired that I must rest." The children obeyed, and Rae laid her head on the window-sill and tried to collect her thoughts. These words rang through her head: "You had your own way about it—you were always headstrong."

"My own way! My own way! All my own fault, and oh, why did I come here?" she cried. Then she thought of Elaine, "the lily-maid of Astolat—"

"Being so very wilful, you must die."

But, oh! how much better to share Elaine's fate, than live tamely on and on, dragging out a miserable life. "If I could only die," she sobbed weakly. "Life is so hard, and—and no one would miss me."

When a great trouble comes to us, the easiest way out of the difficulty seems to die. Death, the consoler, Death, the doorway from darkness to light.

"Rae has come," said Mrs. Hawthorne to Rémy, when he returned from the river.

"Oh, has she?" he asked, striving to speak unconcernedly, and glad that the light was so dim; for in her childish chatter, Mimi had told the truth—Rémy and Kate Erle were engaged. He did not see Rae until late in the evening, when, seeing a figure flitting to and fro in the garden, he discovered that it was she, and feeling that some sort of an explanation was necessary, he sauntered out. Coming upon her without any warning, he began, "Rae—," but the girl turned round and stared at him, with her wild dark eyes, crying disdainfully, "*Qui s'excuse s'accuse.* Don't speak to me!" and disappeared so quickly that he could not tell where she went.

Henceforth they met very coldly. One sunny evening, Rae and Romie went together to gather the brightly-colored leaves, which the wind scattered lavishly abroad. They chose the "Lover's Leap" for their walk—it was a high cliff of gray stone, with jagged points jutting out here and there, which made one shiver to look at. As they wandered up and down, Romie, who was delighted with his treasures, found a still prettier leaf, and called Rae to look at it. She was very near the edge of the precipice, and, as she turned suddenly, her foot slipped and in one moment she was gone, whirling down, down to the jagged rocks below.

At first Romie was too much frightened to cry; but in a few minutes he ran to the edge, and peering over, saw something white far down in a crevice of the stone, and without waiting to see whether she was dead or alive, he started home. The first person he met was his father, to whom he gave an incoherent account of the matter. Mr. Hawthorne hurried to the place, and clambering down, he found Rae white and senseless. Was she dead? That he could not tell; but he took up the poor little burden in his arms and carried it home.

She revived; but it was only to fall into a stupor, from which she sometimes roused to talk wildly, often thinking she was on the river, and saying how the water rippled, and then crying reproachfully, "Oh! how could you be so cruel, Rémy? But it was my own fault—I had my own way." This she repeated over and over again, until Mrs. Hawthorne, who watched beside her, guessed the sad little story. By and by, when the girl seemed quieter, Mrs. Hawthorne stole down into the parlor, where Rémy stood by one of the windows. "Rémy," she said. He turned and faced her saying,

"What is it, Marian?"

"I have just found out something which astonished me very much, Rémy," she said, meaningly.

"There are many astonishing things in the world," he replied, half guessing what she meant, and speaking defiantly in consequence.

"The astonishing thing to which I refer, is, that you could make Rae Arundel believe you loved her, and then desert her."

"Do you suppose I did not love her?" he asked, hotly; "and that it gave me no pain to 'desert her,' as you are pleased to call it? And by whose advice was it that I proposed to that empty-headed Kate Erle?"

"Ah, Rémy, you cannot excuse yourself by blaming me. But if I ever hurt that poor child, Heaven knows it was innocently," cried poor Marian, torn by a doubt that she was somehow to blame.

A silence. "Is she dying?" asked Rémy in a strange, choked voice.

"Yes; she is dying," answered Marian.

He buried his face in his hands, and his sister turned away, for she could not comfort him.

When she returned to Rae's room, and stood beside her bed, the girl opened her eyes and raised her head a little, asking faintly, "Is it Sunday?" "No, no, Rae, it is not Sunday," replied Marian, glad to hear her speak rationally.

"I thought I heard the bells ringing," and her head fell back wearily.

There was a pause, when Rae said suddenly, "I—I have something to give you"—here she took out a little bunch of withered flowers tied with a knot of blue ribbon. "Give your brother these."

"Do you wish to see him?" asked Mr. Hawthorne, anxiously.

"Ah, no, what good could it do? Give him the flowers, please, and tell him—" her voice died away, and she seemed sinking to sleep.

"Tell him what?" asked Mrs. Hawthorne, bending over her.

"Say to him, 'Rae forgives you,'" she said, opening her wide dark eyes with a strange, tremulous smile; then she turned her face away with a tired sigh.

"Rae!" said Mrs. Hawthorne. There was no answer. A little bird perched on a bough, close beside the open window, began to sing so clearly that Mrs. Hawthorne feared it would awake her.

There was no need of fear; she had gone far away, beyond the snapped and tangled threads of life, beyond its thorns and fading roses.

God pity her, she had had her own way.

☞ Music.—The art of music, whose power has been acknowledged by the most profound thinkers of all ages, is of later growth than her sisters, poetry, sculpture and painting; and its means of communicating ideas are also less positive and direct; but the principles which govern its manifestations are strictly analogous, and we recognize in its very vagueness that yearning after the infinite, that feeling of ineffable loveliness, which, defying, by the electrical rapidity of its action upon the mind, the slow deductions of reason and all powers of analysis, approaches the divine in its bright mystery and inexplicable influence upon our sentiments and emotions.

THE PHANTOM SAILOR.

BY JACK RATLIN.

The ship Agnes was bowling before a twelve-knot breeze, outward-bound from New York to San Francisco, while as stout a crew of seamen as ever trod a deck or manned a capstan were at their work, joyous and happy as seamen always are in the first days of the cruise. Indeed the breath of the salt sea after a cruise on shore, is life and happiness to them. A good captain, mates who knew their duty, and respected the men *as* men, made a life aboard the Agnes as pleasant a lot as could fall to a man who expected nothing better than a life before the mast.

It was night—one of those beautiful evenings which are rarely seen in our northern latitudes. The "port" watch was on deck, and those of the watch who were not on duty lounged about forward ready for work if they were called on by the officer in charge of the deck. The first mate was standing near the wheel, when he saw a man on the quarter deck where he had no right to be, and being a great stickler for ship etiquette, his anger was aroused.

"Look at that son of a gun. Hi, you! What are you doing there? Go forward, you lubber, or I'll start you with a piece of marlin."

The man did not stir, but regarded the mate in a fixed, stony way which more than ever aroused the wrath of the officer, who caught up a knotted rope and made for him. The men at the wheel were staring at the man in surprise because he did not move, when, as the mate neared him and lifted the rope to strike, the man was gone, and the officer stood with uplifted hand staring at vacancy.

Where had he gone? The night was clear, and every object could be distinctly seen from stem to stern. The mate emitted a sharp whistle, and his hand dropped to his side.

"Here's a go, if there ever was one," he muttered. "Did you see the lubber, Barnes?"

"See him," replied the man addressed. "Of course I see him, but where in the name of Davy Jones has he gone. He disappeared quicker than I could scoff a pannikin of lobscouse."

Let no man wonder at the words with which the American sailor adorns his vocabulary. There are dishes concocted aboard ship which are cooked nowhere else upon earth or sea, and mighty among these is "lobscouse."

"This kind of game won't work, my kids," said the mate angrily. "It won't do at no price, and so I don't deceive you. I want to know which of you ducks was on the quarter-deck just now."

But the men denied the soft impeachment so stoutly that he was forced to believe that they were innocent, and at once plunged to the forecastle. He did not enter, because the forecastle of a ship is sacred to the foremast hand, never to be polluted, except upon state occasions, by the tread of an officer's foot.

"Ahoy, you lubbers," he roared, "the next man that comes on deck without orders will roost on maintruck until the morning gilds the rosy east. Now you hear me."

There was no reply from below, only a rumbling snore from the nasal organ of old Jim Best, a right royal snorer. As the mate raised his head he saw the man whom he sought, standing in front of the cabin companion, looking at him as before. Dashing forward in a fury, the form again vanished, and the mate brought up against the cabin with a bump which, as he expressed it, "shook him from truck to keel." As he recovered himself a hand was laid upon his arm, and looking up he saw old Job Dare, a man who had sailed the seas since boyhood. A grizzled, wiry old athlete, whose sixty years had not impaired his vigor; for his life, strange as it may seem, had been one of temperance, although a sailor.

"Mr. Baker," he said, in an awe-struck tone, "don't you go to lift your hand agin it. You only waste your time, for I know the trim of that awful thing. It ain't mortal, Mr. Baker; it ain't mortal."

"Blame my old head if I don't think you are half right, old man," said the mate. "What does it mean?"

"It means this, sir; you've seed that figure twice and lifted your hand agin it. Ef you do it three times, woe be to you, for the man that does it must die."

"Who is it?" whispered the mate, struck aghast by the manner of the old seaman. "Don't let the men hear that sort of stuff, or we'll lose the whole crew at Rio."

"Don't you fear, Mr. Baker, the men won't leave the Agnes while a timber hangs to another. That is the ghost of Tom Trowbridge, who died under double irons in the 'brig' of the Agnes. That man swore, when he was dying, that he'd ha'nt the ship while she sailed the sea. I've bin in her two v'yages sence, and I've got used to it; but I warn ye never to lift a hand agin the phantom for the third time."

"Why?"

"Captain Brigham did it, and he was drowned off Cape Horn. Mr. Tozer did the same, and a greaser rubbed him out in San Francisco. Sam Towney fell from the maintop and broke his neck and all because he struck at the phantom sailor. I won't say no more."

Mr. Baker turned away with a sort of shudder, for though far from a superstitious man he was struck by the strange manner of the old sailor. The seamen seemed to be at ease—a strange thing for men so open to believe in ghostly appearances. Baker was glad when his watch was over, and went to his berth with an uneasy feeling at heart, while old Job Dare went forward with a strange look upon his face.

On went the ship before the wind. Three times before they reached Rio, Baker saw that apparition, and each time the face was so plainly defined that he knew that it belonged to no man aboard ship. It always appeared at night, and from the time Job Dare gave his solemn warning, the mate did not lift his hand against the spectre. Into Rio they went for water, and sailed again in three days. Job Dare saw that the appearance of the spectre was preying upon his first officer, and it troubled him. Three days out of Rio at night, Baker who was ill at ease stole softly to the forecastle, and listened. He could hear the low murmur of voices, and soon Job Dare spoke aloud—

"I won't stand it, Bill," he said. "The fust Dicky is a bully feller, and this sort of work is telling on him."

"I don't keer a cuss," replied a gruff voice. "He can't git red of me short of Acapulc now, any way, and I'll git up to 'Frisco somehow—from thar."

Baker made a leap down the ladder and landing in the middle of the cabin, with his "colt" in his hand, uttered a yell of rage at the following tableau: Job Dare, sitting on the edge of his bunk smoking a very black pipe, and the "phantom sailor," cross-legged, on a sea-chest, swallowing sea-biscuits in a highly workmanlike manner, and washing it down by repeated gulps from a black bottle. Baker pounced upon him and thrashed him until his arm gave out, while the ghost yelled for mercy.

"Now see here, Job," cried Baker, shaking his colt at Dare, "come down off that roost, and tell me what this means, or I'll give you a taste of the same sauce."

"I cave," said Job, with a grin. "And I axes you pardon, ef we fooled ye. You see that this yer is my mate, Pete Furlong. He's sailed with me a good many year, and when he come to ship, the Agnes was full, and the cap wouldn't hev him. So he turned ghost for the time, and I backed him up in it. I hopes as how you'll excuse it."

Baker was wrotby, but the magnitude of the joke overcame him, and he surrendered with a good grace. But if there was any hard work to be done in the Agnes, on that cruise, it fell to the lot of the phantom sailor.

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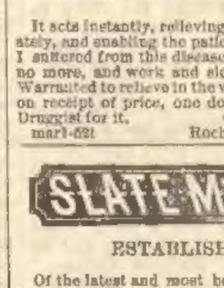

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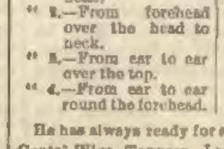

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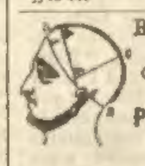

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THE LOST YOUTH.

Oh, never pipe the winds so sweet,
As when we two were young!
Oh, never come from throat of bird,
Such songs as then were sung!
Wind in the tree, bird on the lea,
Piping, singing for you and me.

Oh, never grow in sun-sloped beds
Posies so dainty sweet;
Oh, never grow such grasses green
As those beneath our feet.
Violets blue, and larkspur true,
Growing, blowing for me and you.

But still and still the winds can pipe,
And still from dappled bird
Come songs as sweet upon the lea
As ever listener heard.
It is not they, alas, to-day—
'Tis we, 'tis we, have passed away.

For still the posies bud and blow,
And grasses green are there;
Heartsease and pinks and lavender
Smell sweet upon the air.
And time brings gain, but time brings pain,
For youth comes never back again.

The Distinguished Foreigner.

BY INDE.

I was trying hard to kill time by smoking one Havana after another, and joining lazily in the discussion of a grand hunt, projected for the next fortnight by a few young fellows, like myself, bored to death by everything, save the fresh air of this popular, sea-bathing resort. It came about, that bad management and ill luck had allowed me to fall into the hands of a party of female relations who ruthlessly booked me as escort, especial, "for a month at a detestably fashionable watering-place." Protector, Aunt Eleanor termed me, as if anybody could protect her, and as if anybody was blind to the fact that Uncle Addison had never ventured to say his soul was his own during the twenty-five years it took her to worry him into the grave.

I say it was past my comprehension how she managed it, unless through a sort of weakness I had for my Cousin Mary, which with feminine astuteness she used, to retain my wavering allegiance to what they called pleasure. At all events I was fighting off the tedium and weariness of the place as best I could, vaguely wondering how long these persevering young females could coquette with relay after relay of men, who came, grew tired, and went off, like sensible fellows, to more attractive regions.

I never admitted that I was in love with Mary Addison, but the gossips in our coterie had a foolish way of saying so, and the officers of my regiment had for years talked of it over their Roman punch as a foregone conclusion, and presaged that I would never succeed in my suit. Indeed, they more than insinuated that a young officer with nothing but his pay, was too small game for so skilful an archer as my beautiful, haughty cousin. Perhaps I knew this, perhaps the calm, sensible tone in which she checked my occasional relapses into anything beyond cousinly affection, taught me what a man fain would not see. "No danger in talking to you, Tom, you are too poor for me, I'm so horribly mercenary," she would say, in a light, soft way, that people who did not know her might regard as a delightful pleasantry, but that I, who did know her, accepted as a confoundedly unpalatable truth.

Thus it had gone on, until Mary was twenty-seven, prettier and more queenly than ever, and as unimpressible as the marble basin of the fountain before which I meditated that hot August afternoon, and tenfold more eagerly and exclusively set upon a brilliant match. I hovered around her partially because I could not resist the magnetism, holding me more securely than gyves of iron, and partially to keep other men from succeeding where I had ingloriously failed. So, perhaps it was not at last such a mystery that Aunt Eleanor had "Major Keith" en traine for the summer, or that I bore patiently the "slings and arrows" of my comrades for hesitating about the great hunt in the mountains. "Confound the women," ejaculated Contelle, watching me from under his lashes with half anger. "I wish your cousin would bestow herself on some cadaverous millionaire, and let you return to your senses."

"Ees this de St. Len fountains?" asked a stranger, diffidently coming up at that apropos moment.

"Yes, will you have a seat?" I replied, rather disliking the oppressively handsome appearance of the man even at that early date.

He was very tall, with great black side whiskers, shining broadcloth, a magnificent solitaire diamond ring on a very delicate little finger, and eyeglasses through which he scanned us with a gentlemanly sort of scrutiny.

"Ah, bien! varry nice," he observed, seating himself quite composedly under the envious survey Tim Ferguson, the swell of our mess, cast upon the faultless cut of his Paris made coat. "Just arrived this morning, messieurs," the stranger remarked politely. "It is one cool place like the obateans of la belle France."

Somehow from that we fell to talking, and found the stranger a pleasant, companionable fellow enough, with the exception of a certain affectation, an extra courtesy rather over-doing the thing to my straightforward American notions. "I have no friends here, but I bring de letter of introduction to one, two, four parties," he said in, I thought, remarkably pure English for a man visiting our land for the first time; and taking out a dainty ivory tablet clasped with gold, upon which I caught a glimpse of a coronet traced in the shining metal, he read, "De Judge Conway, de Honorable Monsieur Martin, de Monsieur Reese, den I have some Madames, de Madame Livingston, and de Madame Addison." "Madame Addison," I repeated, with anything but the repose of manner and bland civility of the stranger.

Now, I rather prided myself upon perfect ton, and upon never being betrayed into bruequerie, but where Mary was concerned, the officers always said, "Keith lost his temper and patience," and I verily believe they were correct. "How did you come to have a letter of introduction to her?" I interrogated with considerable acerbity. The Frenchman smiled more compassionately than I precisely liked, and replied with charming suavity:

"My friend, de French Minister, give me dat one great honor."

I knew my aunt had a weakness for foreigners, why, Heaven only can explain, but, in common with most women, she gave the preference to any beggarly attache or sprig of nobility, or gawkish officer in any army, even in Utopia, to her own countrymen, upon whose pretensions she could rely and whose resources were patent to the world. The French minister was claimed among her "particular friends," as, in fact, was anybody, Jew or Gentile, not born in our plebeian country. The slightest pretensions to a title was quite sufficient to drive my aunt and all the absurd females of her set quite wild with enthusiasm and admiration.

I remained silent. The reply was too satisfactory for any exercise of my functions as "protector," but I communicated my resolution not to join the hunt, to the party as we sauntered back to the hotel. "Nobody expected it after that fellow said he had letters to Mrs. Addison," shrewdly rejoined Contelle, understanding me intuitively.

I made an unusually careful toilette that evening, reflecting as I brushed my long mustache that I was not bad looking, even beside the handsome stranger. However, with the perversity of fate, everybody seemed to appreciate my personal advantages except the one woman, for whom, if she desired it, I would have tattooed my face, and worn the primitive costume of a savage.

"My dear Tom, how well you look," remarked my aunt, as I joined them to walk into tea, possibly, with Mary. "And your cousin, does she not look stylish?" she asked in a sort of nervous flutter that made me observe at once that they were both out in marvellous toilettes, and that Mary, in diamonds and point lace, was simply regal. "Tom, we have a distinguished stranger at the table with us, a magnificent man, with letters from my dear friend monsieur le count, the French minister, and Tom—he is a marquis," she said, speaking under her breath, in an awe-stricken tone, while her time-worn face glowed with excitement, and Mary's eyes fairly blazed as she listened to the announcement.

The green-eyed monster was fearfully lashed in my breast when I found this Frenchman seated opposite us, at our own table, looking as well bred and handsome as any man well could. I bowed very distantly and seated myself beside Mary, who blushed as I had not seen her for many a year. Aunt Eleanor whispered to me that she had invited the "Marquis de Frissac" to take a seat at our table, and he had done her the honor to accept, whereupon she poised her head more haughtily than ever and beamed triumphantly upon the surrounding company, who watched the noble occupant of our whilom vacant seat with envious glances.

The marquis immediately became the rage, and was extravagantly lionized by the fair sex. He was an agreeable personage in conversation, though sometimes a trifle rough, which the belles declared rendered him all the more piquant, added a foreign spiciness to his manners. At all events, the Frenchman carried everything before him, and dispensed his attentions loftily, with a certain condescension, stirring my American blood savagely. The women poured adulation at his feet, showing him a preference that might have turned our heads in a ten-fold degree. Perhaps that was why we men held him in such peculiar detestation, and refused to be won over by his *petits soupers*, or select dinners, or fine wines.

We Americans, with a few thousand a year, could not toss our money away as he did, so we went to his suppers, drank his wines, and hated him cordially. "What a difference blood makes," my aunt would say, continually, whenever she caught a glimpse of De Frissac at my cousin's side, which was frequently enough, for from the very first he had been pre-eminently attentive to Mary, in fact the man had absorbed her time and thoughts almost to the exclusion of all others, which was a deeper grudge scored against him in the recesses of my secret heart. "One could single the marquis out among ten thousand of these vulgar Americans, and know him to be a nobleman."

"He looks the vulgarest of Americans," I say, spitefully.

"My dear Tom, blood will show, I don't think I could be deceived by a low-bred Yankee. One can see at a glance that he has always worn the purple, that he is the descendant of princes and heroes."

I turn away from Mrs. Addison in disgust, and smoke countless Havanas, night after night on the piazza, in a venomous state of mind toward this presumptuous foreigner, for whose empty titles I believe my aunt would have pawned her soul. Mary Addison was exquisitely elegant in her manners, never rude nor loud, and despite the hauteur tincturing too strongly every element of her composition, irresistibly fascinating. There was pride in the brilliant smile, pride in the lithe, willowy figure, pride in the very folds of her graceful sweeping skirts, pride visible in everything, yet it was a winning pride, when she willed it so, or, ah me! as glacial and repellant as an iceberg.

Who could wonder that this Frenchman had singled her out as the shrine of his worship, no other woman was so fitted for the coronet of a marquise as Mary Addison. I detested the man heartily; he was continually in my cousin's vicinity, walking, riding or dancing, he installed himself as her escort.

She would wear the flowers he was perpetually sending, although I insisted they were not becoming. I stood in the doorway one night watching De Frissac whirl her in the dreamy mazes of the waltz, and thought how much lovelier she would have been without his marguerites and lilies twined in her hair. Nevertheless I could not but admit that Mary looked radiantly beautiful, her cheeks glowed and her eyes sparkled with the toned, high-bred gayety characteristic of her.

"My dear Mrs. Addison, you are positively the envy of all American mothers. I suppose Mary will soon be Marquise de Frissac?" observed Mrs. Livingston, (who had no daughters) approaching my aunt, who usually took a position commanding the outside breeze and inside finesse.

I leaned on the back of her chair, and the congratulatory remark was as distinct to me as the person to whom it was addressed. Had a man uttered the prediction, I would have struck him then and there, but a woman, what was there for me save silence? The reality had never been presented to me in this forcible way. The muscles of my face hardened spasmodically, I had stubbornly rejected this idea.

My aunt, and it was just like the proud, ambitious woman, put up her eye-glasses and smiled mysteriously; "oh, no," were her words, but the tone was emphatically, "oh, yes."

"You are very reticent, my dear madam, but it is no secret, the marquis we all know has formally asked your consent, and insists upon an immediate marriage. I congratulate you with all my heart upon this grand match."

Instead of denying it in toto, as I expected, Aunt Eleanor fanned herself a moment, and then said almost patronizingly, with a very Frenchified shrug of the shoulders, "Since his lordship has chosen to make it public, which is the French custom, you know, I suppose we may as well confess that Marie" (she gave it the French pronunciation) "has accepted the Marquis de Frissac."

I stood like a statue while Mrs. Livingston and all the fashionable fools overwhelmed Aunt Eleanor with congratulations upon the dazzling prospects of her daughter, though many a young face turned green with jealousy, and many an eye glared enviously on Mary Addison having

A DOWNFALL FOR ART.

FAIR DAMSEL (who, though an admirer of the divine art, has an objection to pipes, portfolios, maulsticks, &c., down Chestnut street).—"You're going this way, I think, Mr. Sketcham?"

ARTIST.—"Oh, yes!"

F. D.—"Ah! I'm going the other!"

every waltz, and actually being the fiancee of the great marquis.

Somehow this abrupt revelation fell upon me with stunning force. I could not believe or realize that the love deluding me for so many years, was about to be snatched away by this foreigner, this stranger with doubtless a thousand amours.

I relished the little bitter, sneering speeches dropping from the lips of disappointed belles who had angled vainly for a French coronet. "These foreigners will have money," suggested a poor but pretty blonde, who died hard in the matrimonial scuffle. "It's a shame to jilt Major Keith just for a title," remarked another, who had fought a good fight for that title herself. "The marquis wants her money." "Oh, dear, how princely he is!" resolved itself into a chorus around me.

I waited and watched, surlily hearing all, but caring for naught, in the dull, benumbed feeling that held me, a torpor from which I longed never to recover. The whole scene was like a piece on the stage. I observed it drearily, uninterestedly, the buzz of the crowd circling around my aunt, and the beautiful figure, crowned with marguerites and lilies, floating among the dancers ever more graceful than any other.

"Tom, my dear nephew, take me out on the piazza. I want a breath of fresh air," suddenly remarked my aunt, appropriating my services without further ceremony. "You seem depressed, my dear boy," she observed, kindly, when we had traversed the piazza two or three times.

"Is this true?" I demanded, fiercely.

"The engagement of your cousin, I suppose you mean, Thomas," replied my aunt, with a touch of her new dignity. "Yes, I meant to have told you earlier."

"But this adventurer," I said in a white-heat of bitter anger, "of whom you know nothing, except his name, and not even that he has a a right to that."

Of course she laid it all to the score of intense disappointment on my part, and Heaven knows there was enough of it rankling in my heart to urge me to anything; but I had other motives, the peril to my beautiful cousin of hastily marrying a man of whose habits and nature she knew nothing.

I made a vehement remonstrance, saying some not very courteous things of unscrupulous plans and heartless sacrifices, to which Mrs. Addison replied by reminding me that she always meant her daughter to marry a nobleman, and that neither had ever cared in the least for Americans. She believed in birth and blood, the "blue blood" was evident in everything; her highest ambition, she continued complacently, was gratified by this grande parti, and I might spare myself the unpleasant results of further remonstrance.

"I will speak to Mary," I persisted, as her mother turned coolly away and returned to her seat and countless flatterers.

It was late before an opportunity offered to speak to Mary. She was holding a kind of levee, everybody offering congratulations, while De Frissac stood by her side twirling his mustache, and looking amused and curious.

"What is it, Tom?" she asked, when by the exercise of some of my old tact and diplomacy I succeeded in taking her away to the piazza.

"Are you going to marry him?" I asked, striving manfully to clear the huskiness from my voice.

"Certainly! Did not mamma tell you?" Mary answered, in some surprise.

"Mary, I do not ask you to reject—" I began.

"Of course not," she interpolated, quietly.

"But I do ask you to wait and know something of this man."

She turned slowly, so that the light fell on her clear-cut face and classic head, with those cursed marguerites twined about it. There was a soft look in her eyes, though the voice never wavered in its musical tones.

"Tom, ambition is the ruling passion of my life. I gratify that in this match with De Frissac. It is a hard thing to do," she said, with a little gulp, "but I care for nothing else, and am not worthy of your regret. Tom, forget me, I am a heartless woman; despise me if you will, but I wish you would not."

"Is it too late, Mary?" I asked, desperately.

"Too late; we leave this to-morrow night, to prepare for my marriage." She withdrew her hand, then paused a moment. "Tom, promise me, that if I ever need a friend, you will still be my reliance."

"I swear it," was my reply. And with a simple "adieu," Mary quitted me.

I waited until she passed up-stairs out of sight; listening to the sound of her footsteps dying away in the distance, and then I dashed out into the darkness and rain. The raging storm without, could never equal the storm tearing my heart so ruthlessly.

I never loved Mary as madly, as when she stood there with those marguerites in her hair, and bade me despise her. Despise her! My God, she knew I could not—she knew that she was the life of my life, that I had loved her from boyhood.

All night long, I walked in the drenching rain, with head bared to the elements, struggling to subdue my heart into endurance. It was no dull pain now—it was acute suffering.

The gray mists of early dawn grew roseate, as I returned to my hotel. And Contelle, smoking at his window, turned away to avoid seeing me—and for once forbore to fling a jest at my unseemly appearance. It was startling enough when I passed the mirror and saw reflected therein my haggard face, dripping hair, and wet clothes. "A miserable wreck," I reflected, bitterly.

Hours later, I was still sitting there, smoking a lonely pipe, when a sharp tap at the door reminded me that I had not changed my dress, or attempted to improve my outward man in any way. The door, however, was instantly opened, and Contelle entered.

"Why, major, you are confoundedly knocked up, by this affair," he said, cheerfully.

"I don't deny it," I responded.

"It's hard lines on a fellow, to lose such a woman; but I want you to dress right away, I have an idea that the thing is not so bad, after all."

"Nothing can make it better," I answered, despondently.

"I don't know about that; in short, I might as well tell you, there's the deuce of a commotion down-stairs; the marquis has had his bill sent in, and can't pay. A jolly heavy one it is too, for wines and suppers, ad infinitum, and there are rumors of imposition—all sorts of things. The fellow has asked for an interview with the proprietor. They are closeted just now, confound it, Keith, what's the matter?"

I had leaped from my chair, kicking it across the room out of my way, and was pitching off my coat and pantaloons, in a maniacal way that startled Contelle. In ten minutes my toilette was completed, and we were on the piazza, among a crowd of watering-place loafers, excitedly discussing the new sensation, and decidedly enjoying the turn affairs had taken. "They've pitched him," exclaimed half a dozen voices, as my friends pressed around me, for I was rather popular among my comrades. "He is no more a marquis than I am," shouted one. "He is the cook from the Hotel de Paris," added another. "Curse the fellow's insolence, he has asked the proprietor to let him go into the kitchen and prove his talents, and pay his bill at the same time."

Excitement ran to the highest pitch. Some of the women shed tears of distress; and some rejoiced; some declared that they suspected it all along—but all of them resented it with extraordinary bitterness, and were terribly vindictive in their wrath. The men were content with the denouement, and delighted. I made no secret of my satisfaction, and gave a petite souper myself that very night, as a conclusive proof of it; at which the toasts were spicy and encouraging to myself, at the expense of the late "lion," and we all spent a convivial evening—prolonging it into the wee small hours.

Every one of us acknowledged his pluck when the quondam marquis sunned himself on the lower piazza the very next day in white habiliments, with a square paper cap on his black locks, looking as insolently handsome as in his palmy days of triumph, and apparently enjoying a flirtation with the pretty housemaids even more than with Mary Addison and the belles of the upper ten thousand.

My aunt was all from the shock, but recovered sufficiently to depart quietly without my valuable attendance; in fact, she flatly refused to see me. I should have felt the slight terribly had not a fragrant violet-tinted billet reached me, which ran thus:

"Tom, it was severe, but it has cured me. You promised not to despise me. I have deserved all for my pride and ambition.

MARY."

I remained a few days to enjoy the choice French cookery of the ci-devant marquis. He vindicated his truth by proving himself a capital cook, and his effrontery by sauntering aroound in the evening in a conspicuous cap and white apron, magnificently courteous and irresistible to the black-eyed maids.

My aunt never forgot or forgave that "French villain," as she termed him, but I never heard much from her afterward of distinguished foreigners, "blue blood," etc., and vulgar Americans. Mary bore the mortification as coolly as she had borne the supposed honor, "because," she confessed, "until then she never knew how much she cared for her faithful Tom." So we were married quietly that very fall, and she is the sweetest woman, and best wife in Christendom, and has no hankering after titled foreigners.

☞ An Illinois circus man owns a boy aged eighteen and a girl aged sixteen, whom he purchased of a Dubuque father seven years ago.

The Accident which Happened to Lucy.

BY DAISY BURNS.

Everybody wonders how Lucy Wills lost her lover. She is a very pretty girl as well as accomplished and intelligent. Dr. Hampton was a great catch, and when he came to Nortonsburg, Lucy was not the only girl who determined to "set her cap" for him, and Mrs. Grundy wondered who would captivate him; but very soon the young physician showed a strong preference for Lucy, and pretty little Lucy was delighted. Every few days they were seen together, riding, walking, sailing, etc., and the little boys counted the dimes they made carrying watermelons and things from the doctor to Miss Lucy. But all at once his attentions ceased. For a time he moped about in a very quiet way; then he began visiting Avice Leigh, and the village gossips wondered why it was so. But you see they didn't know anything of that buggy ride Lucy took with the doctor, the accident that happened, nor what came of it. Lucy knows why she lost him, and so does the doctor, but she will never tell, and he's a perfect gentleman.

You must understand the doctor had not fully declared himself, but he intended doing so, and concluded 'twould be so nice to whisper the sweet words in her ear as they drove along the shady turnpike. He invited her to drive out with him, she accepted and away they went.

They were very gay, quoting poetry and making love in that round-about way that comes just before the declaration, when the doctor's horse backed his ears, shook his head, kicked and did so many queer things that Lucy became frightened, and, before her lover could prevent, jumped from the buggy. Dr. Hampton after quieting his horse went to her.

"Darling, are you hurt?" he asked. Lucy blushed.

"I believe—I think I've sprained my—my foot. It was very foolish in me to do so, but I can walk to the buggy, and we must go home;" she attempted to walk, but fell back powerless in her lover's arms.

"You are hurt," he said, "you must let me see your foot," and she put out her little foot clad in a neatly-fitting boot.

"Your shoe will have to come off," he said. "The ankle is swollen badly."

"Oh, no, no, go away," she said, as he began unlacing her boot. "You shall not take off my shoe." But here the keen pain struck her again and she fainted, while her lover removed the tiny boot. But immediately he started back in amazement, for there before his bewildered gaze wore the five tiny toes of his lady-love peeping out from an immense hole at one extremity of her stocking, while at the other was a little round heel peeping out as slyly as the five little toes; and then the doctor knew his little dream was over, for of all things he admired neatness in a woman more than anything else. When Lucy recovered, he carried her to the buggy, was kind and gentle, drove her home, but the intended proposal was left unsaid.

Lucy knew she had lost him, and reasoned within herself, "He had no business to take off my shoe." And he thought to himself, "She had no business wearing stockings with holes in them."

Accidents will happen, young ladies, and the safest plan always is to be neat, and not think as Lucy did, "Oh, those holes will never be seen, they're away down in my boot," for if you do, your fate may some day be the same as hers.

Answers to Correspondents.

PAY YOUR POSTAGE.—Authors and others often send us letters and manuscripts not fully paid. In those cases the Department here enforces payment of the deficiency—which we either have to pay, or to decline receiving the letters or manuscripts. Authors will also bear in mind that the Department now requires letter postage on all manuscripts—therefore it is often cheaper, as it is always safer, to send large packages by express.

We cannot undertake to answer questions relating to the acceptance or rejection of manuscripts in this column. And there is no occasion of writing to ask whether we will examine a manuscript. Send it on, and we will examine it; keeping a copy, to avoid all danger of loss—as we do not hold ourselves responsible for the safe return of manuscript.

FLOY SENARS, (Mills, Mo.,) asks: "1st. Is the Lady's Friend now published? 2d. Would you buy sketches of western real life?" 1st. It is not. 2d. We cannot say till we examine matter how it would suit us. The specimen copies you requested have been sent.

BARKOMER, (Auburn, N. Y.,) writes to inquire if we know of anything that will give an increase of flesh. Many rules have been published by physicians and others, but we doubt that they are of efficacy in many cases. Among these rules are to eat plentifully of milk, sugar, and farinaceous food—and take only a moderate amount of exercise; especially, never walk when you can ride.

AN OLD SUBSCRIBER, (Marion, Ala.,) writes: "I have written to you once previously, but received no answer. Now again. 1st. In promenading with a young lady, which arm should you take, the right or left, or is there any rule on the subject? 2d. Is it not customary for young ladies receiving rings from young men, to return them when a misunderstanding occurs? 3d. For how much can you obtain the following pieces of music—if you can get them at all? 'Good-bye, Sweetheart;' 'Good-night, Good-night, Beloved;' 'The Step-mother;' and 'No one to Love,' 4th. Is there any such fish as the devil-fish; and is it true that it can hold on with such peculiar tenacity? 5th. How do you pronounce Pompeii? How do you pronounce Adder?" We do not remember having received your former letter. If we did, we answered it. 1st. The rule is, when on the street, to give the lady the inside position, the one of the right or left arm being governed by this usage. 2d. We believe there is generally a balancing of accounts on such occasions—often followed by what should have had precedence, namely, the correction of the misunderstanding. 3d. They can all be obtained of Leu & Walker, of this city. Price 25 cents each. 4th. There is such a fish as the devil-fish, and powerful and hideous creatures they are, though at the same time, strange to say, timid and harmless, avoiding rather than attacking man. It is a cartilaginous fish of the ray family, sometimes of enormous size. A specimen taken in the Atlantic, near the entrance of the Delaware bay, in 1828, was so heavy as to require three pairs of oxen, a horse, and several men to drag it on shore. Its weight was five (5) tons, and it measured 17½ feet long, and 18 feet wide. The skin on the back was blackish-brown, and on the belly black and white and very slimy. The mouth was 2½ feet wide, the greatest breadth of skull 5 feet, and the distance between the eyes 4 1-6 feet. This specimen is described by Mitchell in "Annals of the Lyceum of Natural History of New York," and also in the Journal of the Academy of Natural Sciences; so its existence is well authenticated. The devil-fish is occasionally seen by fishermen on the coast of the southern States in summer and autumn. Many wonderful stories have been told of its strength and ferocity and its extraordinary shape and size, thus transforming a powerful but inoffensive animal into a terrible monster in the eyes of the credulous and ignorant. When attacked, it is true, in defending itself, this creature could inflict, with the serrated spine of its tail, deep, lacerating and fatal wounds to man or fish within its range. Its tenacity of hold (if it once gets hold) must be great. 5th. Pom-pā'-yee. Ad'-e-ser.

M. S. K., (Easton, Pa.,) writes: "1st. I am a lad, 16 years of age, living in a store in a country town. I would like to go in a bank and make it my business. What would be my best plan to secure such a situation? 2d. Does a person have to go through a course of book-keeping, and receive a diploma before they can enter a bank? 3d. What kind of study should one be well acquainted with? 4th. What do you think of my penmanship? I am willing to do anything in a bank and to work hard, for I feel that I can work my way up to the mark I wish to attain. My knowledge is limited, but I can with practice gain a sufficient amount of learning to fit me for that position." 1st. We like the spirit of your communication, and if you retain it, holding strictly to principle, and doing your best at all times, we think your chances of success in the line toward which your ambition directs you are good. Your best plan to commence on would be to obtain any situation, however humble, in some banking institution, and, as you say, "work your way up." There are often, if not always, opportunities of the kind you desire for wide-awake, persevering boys. 2d. No special preparation is necessary, but a knowledge of book-keeping would serve you admirably. A course at a good Commercial College might help you, but your plan need not embrace that. 3d. To answer this question literally, we would say the Ans- kind; the kind that has an object. To take you as you mean, we answer that the study of banks and banking and kindred subjects would be beneficial. 4th. Good, for one of your age, but your composition needs improvement. On the whole we have hopes of you. Go ahead.

C. W. B., (Hayfield, Pa.,) asks us to solve the following question: "A's wife dies, leaving children. A and B then marry sisters; B's wife dies, and B, for his second wife, marries A's daughter by his first wife; then A's son by the second wife and B's daughter by the first wife marry, they being cousins. What relation are their children to the old folks, and how are they related all through?" We present this problem, or conundrum, for the entertainment of any of our readers who may feel inclined to amuse themselves in that way. For our own part we have neither time nor inclination for such useless mental exercise. We want to preserve our faculties for the general benefit of our correspondents.

M. L. S. B., (Richmond, Va.,) in a letter says, incidentally, in reference to a late question by another correspondent, that there is a poem entitled "If We Knew," beginning thus:

"If we knew from the first what the years were to bring,
Would we ever be able to frolic and sing?"

If "H. A." (our former correspondent) refers to that poem, it was written by Mrs. Mary E. Dodge, and first published about four years ago.

ROBIN writes: "As I am a subscriber to THE POST, I would like to ask you a few questions; the first has caused considerable argument in this community: 1st. A man went hunting, and 'treed' a squirrel; he could just see it on the opposite side of the tree; he went clear round the tree in order to get a full sight of the squirrel, it keeping on the opposite side of the tree all the time. The question is, did the man go around the *squirrel*? 2d. Three men wish to carry a stick of timber in this manner: Two of the men at each end of a bar, with the timber resting on the bar, and the third man hold of one end of the timber; at what distance from each end of the timber must the men with the bar be, that each one will carry one-third of the whole weight, and give your rule for solution. 3d. How are my handwriting and punctuation for a boy of 21 years? Would the former answer for book-keeping, and wherein is it deficient?" 1st. This question has already been addressed us, and we have given our opinion. See No. 17 of the Post. We trust your neighbors will not permit themselves to become dangerously excited over the matter. 2d. "Rustic" and others will please remember that we do not solve mathematical problems in this column. We have just as much and sometimes a little more than we can do to answer the other classes of questions put to us. 3d. Both need improvement. Your handwriting would hardly answer for book-keeping, unless for some one not particular in that respect. It needs general cultivation. From its appearance we judge that you write slowly and awkwardly.

RANGER, (Hipon, La Belle Co., Kansas,) writes: 1st. What will be the cost for the Post and Peterson's Magazine? 2d. What paper of magazine does —— contribute to? 3d. Should La Belle be spelled in one or two syllables? 4th. Why is the close of a school called the commencement? 1st. "Post," and "Peterson's Magazine," $4.50; "Post," and "Godey's," for $5.50; will send all three for $7. 2d. We do not know. 3d. We do not exactly understand your meaning. We do not see how two words could be spoken or pronounced in one syllable only. The question we suppose should be as to whether two or three syllables are pronounced. The phrase is pronounced Lah Bel. 4th. Because on that day students leave their school or college and commence their new life of practical labor.

A FRIEND, (Hanlin's Station, Pa.,) asks: "1st. Do you have a select number of contributors, or do you receive MSS. from whoever pleases to send them, and then make a selection? 2d. What kind of paper do your contributors use?" 1st. We examine all MSS. sent to us, and select according to merit and availability. 2d. Note-paper is largely used by our writers and correspondents. Thanks for your kind words of commendation and friendship.

J. A. S. asks: "1st. How old was Christopher Columbus when he died? Where was he buried? 2d. Who was Maximilian? Was he any relation to Napoleon Bonaparte? 3d. Were you ever at Fingal's Cave? If so, please give us a description of it. 4th. Where is the highest land on the Western Continent? Where on the Eastern? 5th. What caused Napoleon Bonaparte to seek a divorce from Josephine? 6th. Is it proper for a young lady to correspond with a gentleman to whom she is not engaged? 7th. Can you give me a recipe for making cotton-seed pie? How do you prepare the seed for it? Do you put a top crust on it? 8th. How is my writing?" 1st. Authorities are not agreed as to the date of his birth. It is probable that he was born either in 1441 or 1448. He died on the 20th of May, 1506. His remains were first deposited in the Convent of St. Francis, Spain; were transferred in 1513 to the Carthusian Monastery of Las Cuevas; were taken in 1536 to St. Domingo, and placed in the Cathedral of that city; thence were conveyed in great pomp in 1796 to the Cathedral of Havana, where they now repose. 2d. Maximilian was an Austrian Archduke, who was for a time Emperor of Mexico—a distinction that cost him his life. He was not a relation of Bonaparte's. 3d. We never visited that wonderful and romantic spot. 4th. In South America, Nevado De Sorata, a peak of the Andes, is believed to be the highest point on the continent. On the Eastern continent, the peak some years ago surveyed by Col. Waugh is believed to be the loftiest in the world. It was named by him Mt. Everest, in honor of one of the surveyors-general of India, and is 29,002 feet in height. 5th. Political reasons, which you can learn by reading any history of his life. 6th. Under some circumstances it is, under others not. 7th. We know nothing of that variety of pastry. We think we would leave the top crust off—so as to see what the preparation looked like. 8th. More care is needed in the formation of the letters.

NEBUS, (Falls Village, Conn.,) writes: "1st. What will eradicate dandruff from the head? I am greatly annoyed by its falling on my clothes and rendering them almost unfit to be seen. I have tried several things, but they are of no avail. 2d. What wages ought a good drug clerk command? 3d. I will wind up by asking the inevitable question, What do you think of my hand-writing, is it good enough for first-class book-keeping?" 1st. We know of nothing that will give certain relief. The improvement of the general health often mitigates the annoyance. Try vinegar and water. If this does no good, try borax and water. Both are excellent cleansing. Use a soft hair-brush. 2d. The wages paid, even to good clerks, very widely. Some in this city receive as much as fifteen hundred dollars; others, not more than one-third of that sum. 3d. With a little care you would bring it up to the highest standard required.

KATE L., (Rahway, N. J.,) asks: "1st. What is the name of —— latest work, and where can it be obtained? 2d. Where is the best music-school outside of Boston and New York? 3d. What piano is the best?" 1st. ——. J. B. Lippincott & Co. will furnish the book. Price by mail, $1. 2d. We answered this question two or three weeks ago. There are good music-schools in nearly all the principal cities. 3d. That is as much a matter of opinion as of fact. Every maker claims that his is the best.

AFFLICTION, (Ohio.) The following treatment will tend to improve your case, and perhaps give you entire relief: Eat only plain, wholesome, unstimulating food, avoiding all spices and salt meats; bathe frequently in water not too cold; exercise a great deal in the open air; sleep in a cool, well-ventilated apartment, on a hard bed, under light covering, and never on your back; keep your mind from dwelling on the subject of your affliction; and give yourself regular occupation to the limit of your strength. If you have spare time, study chemistry, natural philosophy, history, &c. Persevere in this plan, and do not be discouraged if even at the end of a year you do not get well. If your case is very serious, consult a regular physician, but above all things avoid quacks. In regard to your concluding question, we can only say, remove the cause, and the effect will cease. An immediate and entire reform of your habits is a first condition of recovery.

M. M. M., (Branchtown,) writes: "I am acquainted with a family who formerly lived in Ohio. I should say their education is fair; but they claim to be very well educated. In conversation they always use the word 'shaw,' (pronounced 'shoo,') for the past tense of the verb 'show.' As, 'he shew his hand.' They consider it belongs to the same class of irregular verbs as 'blow,' 'grow' and 'know.' Is there any authority for this pronunciation and use of the word?" Webster says: "The use of shew for show, common in some parts of the United States, is a gross vulgarism, which cannot be too carefully avoided."

DUNBAR, (Washington, Pa.,) asks: "1st. Was there ever an authoress, of some celebrity, known as Mrs. Grant? A literary friend of mine says there was, but knows little about her." 1st. Anne Grant, better known as Mrs. Grant, of Laggan, was a Scottish authoress, born in Glasgow, in 1755, died in Edinburgh, in 1838. She spent a portion of her life in this country, in the interior of New York, where she had the good fortune to come under the notice of Madame Schuyler, widow of Colonel Philip Schuyler, to whom she gratefully acknowledged that she "owed whatever culture of mind she received." Among her literary works are "Letters from the Mountains," and "Memoirs of an American Lady"—a pleasant picture of her own childhood and colonial life in America. She was a lady of remarkable conversational powers and great moral worth, endeared to a wide circle of friends.

M. A. S., (Dayton, Ohio,) writes: "Please give me some information regarding the School of Design, in your city. What would be the probable cost of board and tuition per term? Whom shall I address in order to get a circular?" Board, probably, $5 or $6 a week. Tuition, $40 per term of five months. Address for circular, Miss E. Croasdale, School of Design, corner Filbert and Merrick streets, Philadelphia.

[Several letters are held over to be answered in our next.]